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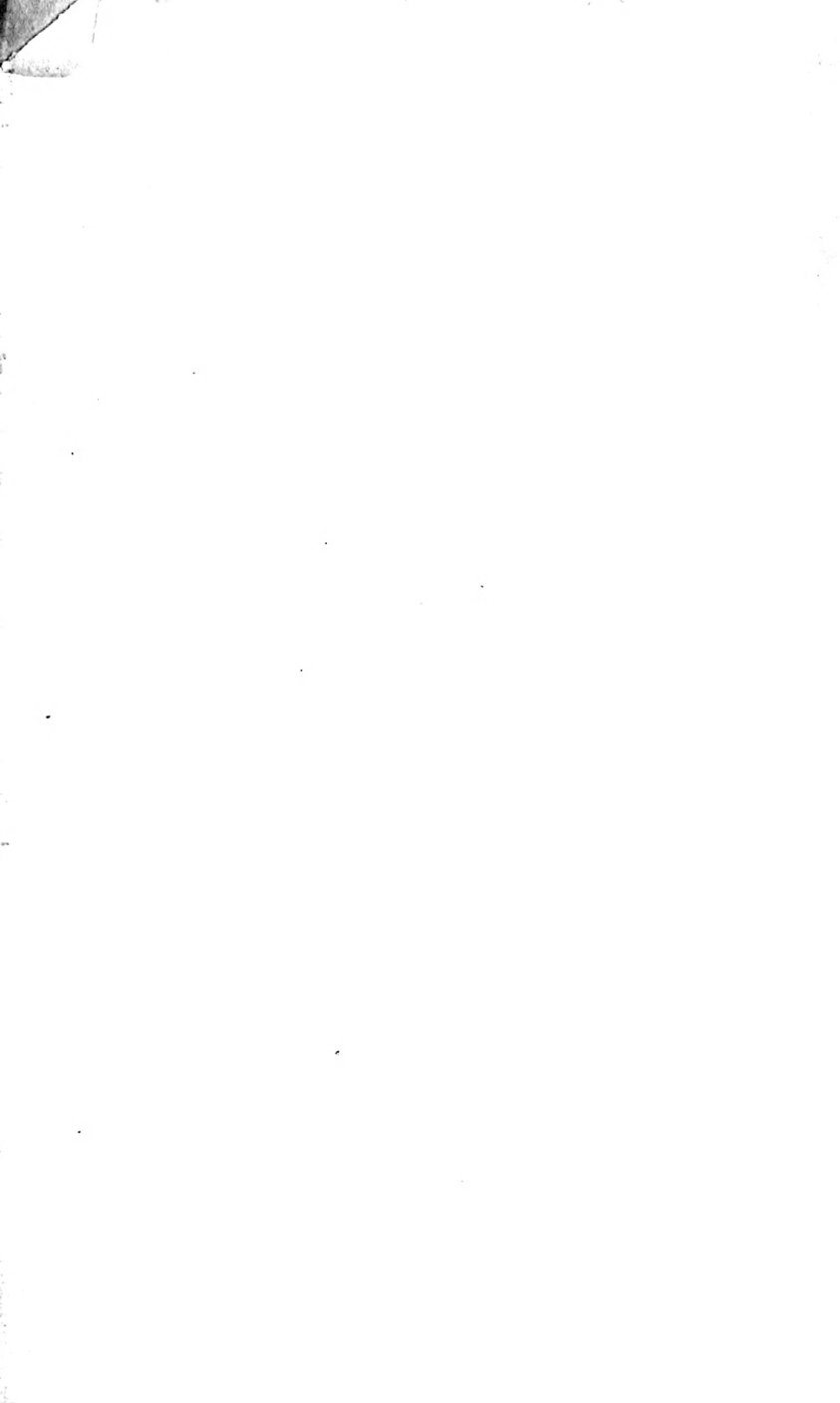
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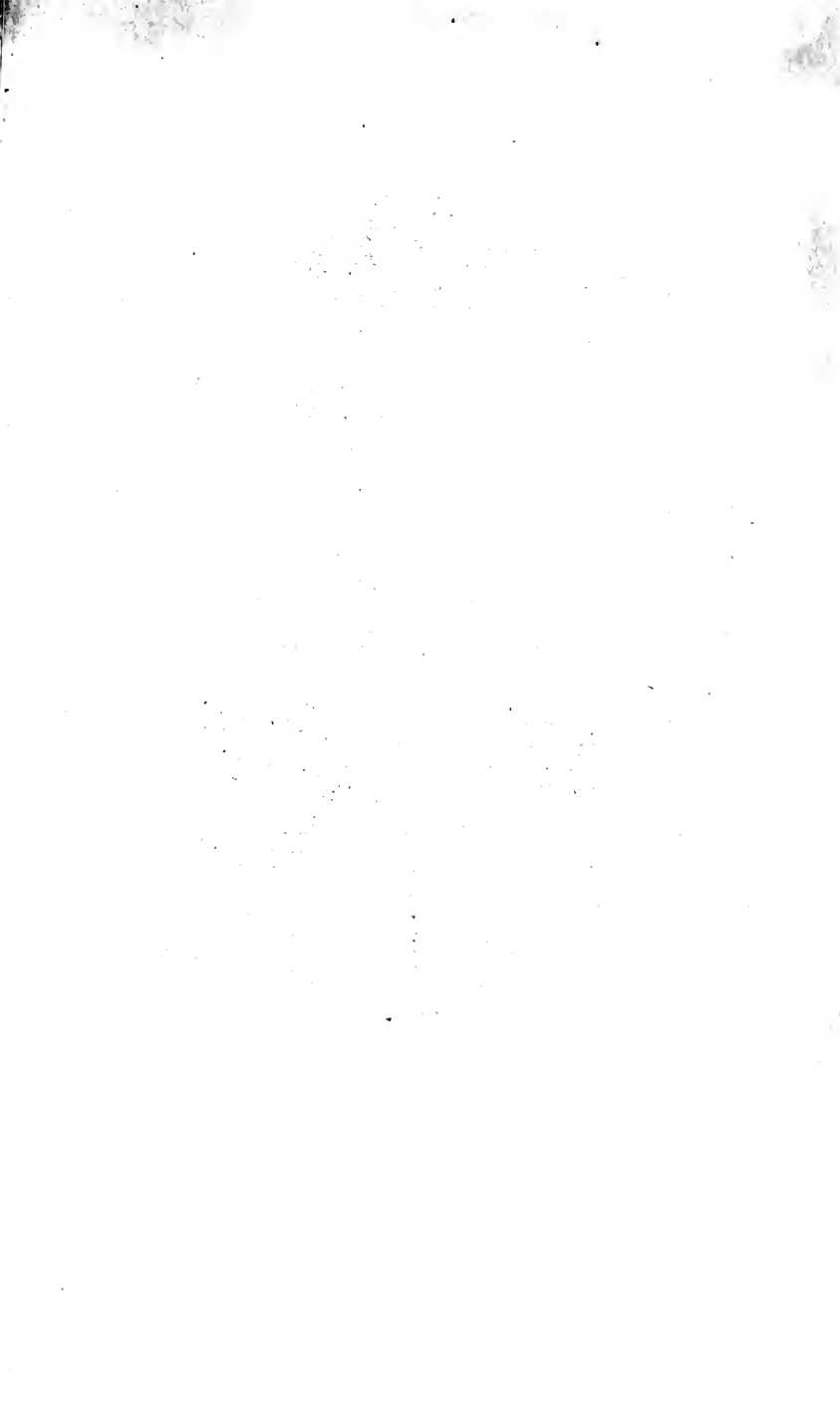
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Math^o Lee









COOPER

MICHAEL D.D.

THE
MISCELLANEOUS
WORKS

Of the late REVEREND and LEARNED
CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.

Principal Librarian of the University of *Cambridge*.

In FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON,

Printed for R. MANBY in the *Old Bailey*, near
Ludgate-hill; and H. S. COX in *Pater-noster Row*.

MDCCLV.

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A F R E E

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE Reputation of *Dr. Middleton's* Writings is so well established in the World, that nothing needs be said in Favour of the present Collection of them into one Body, especially as many of them were so scarce, that they could not be procured without great Difficulty. It were to be wished, that he had pursued and completed the Design, which he had formed, of composing an exact History of his Works, with the Occasions and Circumstances of them: in defect of which we can only subjoin a Catalogue of them, in the Order in which they were printed, after having premised a few Particulars concerning his Life, additional to these pointed out by the Index under his Name.

HE was Son of a Clergyman in *Yorkshire*, possessed of an easy Fortune, besides his Preferment in the Church; and was born at *Richmond*, in that County, on the 27th of *December*, 1683. At seventeen Years of Age he was sent to *Trinity College* in *Cambridge*, of which he afterwards was Fellow; quitting it upon his Marriage, when he was twenty-seven Years old, with

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

Mrs. *Drake*, Daughter of Mr. *Morris*, of *Oak-Morris* in *Kent*, and Widow of Counsellor *Drake* of *Cambridge*, a Lady of ample Fortune. After his Marriage he took a Living, in the Gift of his Wife, but resigned it in about a Year.

His chief Residence for the rest of his Life was at *Cambridge*, of which University he was chosen principal Library-Keeper, and held that Place till his Death. After the Decease of his first Wife, he travelled through *France* into *Italy*, and was at *Rome* in 1724. In *December* 1731 he was appointed Woodwardian Professor; which Post he surrendered in 1734, and soon after married *Mary*, Daughter of the Rev. Mr. *Conyers Place*, of *Dorchester*; and upon her Death, his third Wife, *Anne*, the Daughter of *John Powell*, Esq; of *Boughroyd*, in the County of *Radnor*, in *North Wales*. He accepted a Living from Sir *John Frederick*, Bart. not long before his Death, which was occasioned by a slow hectic Fever, and Disorder in his Liver, on the 28th of *July* 1750, in the 67th Year of his Age, at *Hildersham* in *Cambridgeshire*; an Estate of his own purchasing.

A C A T A-

A
C A T A L O G U E

O F

DR. MIDDLETON'S WORKS,

In the Order in which they were
published :

All of them contained in the following Col-
lection in 8vo. except *Germana quædam
Antiquitatis eruditæ Monumenta*, which, be-
ing less interesting than the rest, and onely
adapted to the Curious, are continued in
their original Form.

REMARKS, Paragraph by Paragraph, up- 1721.
on the Proposals lately published by Ri-
chard Bentley, for a new Edition of the Greek
Testament and Latin Version. *London*, 4to.
Some farther Remarks, Paragraph by Para-
graph, upon Proposals lately published for a
new Edition of a Greek and Latin Testa-
ment, by Richard Bentley; containing a
full

A CATALOGUE of

full Answer to the Editor's late Defence of his said Proposals, as well as to all his Objections there made against my former Remarks. *London*, 4to.

1723. Bibliothecæ Cantabrigiæ ordinandæ Methodus quædam, quam Domino Procancellario Senatuique Academico considerandam & perficiendam Officii & Pietatis ergo proponit. *Cantabr.* 4to.
1726. De Medicorum apud veteres Romanos degentium conditione Dissertatio; quâ contra Viros celeberrimos Jac. Sponium & Rich. Meadium, M. DD. servilem atque ignobilem eam fuisse ostenditur. *Cantabr.* 4to.
1727. Dissertationis de Medicorum Romæ degentium conditione ignobili & servili, contra anony-mos quosdam *Notarum brevium, Responsonis*, atque *Animadversionis* Auctores, Defensio. Pars prima, *Cantabr.* 4to.
1729. A Letter from Rome, shewing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism, or the Religion of the present Romans derived from that of their heathen Ancestors. *London*, 4to. published in May, 1729. The fourth Edition was published at London, 1741, in 8vo, with a *Prefatory Discourse* and *Postscript*.
1731. A Letter to Dr. Waterland; containing some Remarks on his *Vindication of Scripture*; in answer to a Book intitled, *Christianity as old as the Creation*. Together with the Sketch or Plan of another Answer to the said Book. *London*, 8vo. published in December, 1730.
- A Defence of the *Letter to Dr. Waterland*, against the false and frivolous Cavils of the
Author

Dr. MIDDLETON'S WORKS.

- Author of the *Reply*. *London*, 8vo. published in November, 1731.
- Some farther Remarks on a *Reply* to the *Defence* of the *Letter to Dr. Waterland*; wherein the Author's Sentiments, as to all the principal Points in Dispute, are fully and clearly explained in the manner that has been promised. *London*, 8vo. published in April, 1723. 1732.
- Oratio de novo Physiologiæ explicandæ munere ex celeberrimi Woodwardi Testamento instituto: habita Cantabrigiæ in Scholis publicis. *Cantabr.* 4to. published in July, 1732.
- Remarks on some *Observations* addressed to the Author of the *Letter to Dr. Waterland*. By the Author of the Letter. *London*, 8vo. published in May, 1733. 1733.
- A Dissertation concerning the Origin of Printing in England: shewing, that it was first introduced and practised by our Countryman, William Caxton, at Westminster, and not, as is commonly believed, by a foreign Printer at Oxford. *Cambridge*, 4to. published in Feb. 1734-5. 1735.
- The History of the Life of M. Tullius Cicero. *London*, 2 Vol. 4to. 1741.
- The Epistles of M. T. Cicero to M. Brutus, and of Brutus to Cicero: with the Latin Text in the opposite Page, and English Notes to each Epistle: together with a prefatory Dissertation, in which the Authority of the said Epistles is vindicated, and all the Objections of the Rev. Mr. Tunstall particularly considered and confuted. *London*, 8vo. published in November, 1742. 1743.
- Germana quædam Antiquitatis eruditæ Monumenta, &c. *London*, 4to. 1745.

A CATALOGUE of

1747. A Treatise on the Roman Senate. *London*, 8vo. published in March, 1746-7.
An Introductory Discourse to a larger Work, designed hereafter to be published, concerning the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church from the earliest Ages, through several successive Centuries; tending to shew, that we have no sufficient Reason to believe upon the Authority of the primitive Fathers, that any such powers were continued to the Church after the Days of the Apostles. With a Postscript, containing some Remarks on an Archidiaconal Charge, delivered last Summer by the Rev. Dr. Chapman to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury. *London*, 4to. published in April, 1747.
1748. Remarks on two Pamphlets lately published, against *Dr. Middleton's Introductory Discourse*. *London*, 8vo.
1749. A Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church from the earliest Ages, through several successive Centuries. *London*, 4to. published in December, 1748.
1750. An Examination of the Lord Bishop of London's *Discourses concerning the Use and Intent of Prophecy*; with some cursory Animadversions on his late *Appendix, or Additional Dissertation*, containing a farther Inquiry into the Mosaic Account of the Fall. *London*, 8vo. published in January, 1749-50.

POSTHUMOUS.

A Vindication of the *Free Inquiry* into the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted

Dr. MIDDLETON'S WORKS.

subsisted in the Christian Church, &c. from the Objections of Dr. Dodwell and Dr. Church. *London, 1751.*

A Preface to an intended Answer to all the Objections made against the Free Inquiry.

Some cursory Reflections on the Dispute or Disension, which happened at Antioch, between the Apostles Peter and Paul.

Reflections on the Variations, or Inconsistencies, which are found among the four Evangelists, in their different Accounts of the same Facts.

An Essay on the Gift of Tongues, tending to explain the proper Notion and Nature of it, as it is described and delivered to us in the Sacred Scriptures : and as it appears also to have been understood by the Learned, both of the ancient and modern Times.

Some short Remarks on a Story told by the Ancients, concerning St. John the Evangelist, and Cerinthus the Heretic ; and on the use which is made of it by the Moderns, to enforce the Duty of shunning Heretics.

An Essay on the allegorical and literal Interpretation of the Creation and Fall of Man.

De Latinarum Literarum Pronunciatione Disseratio.

Dr. Middleton's Letters to Mr. Warburton, &c.

A
FREE INQUIRY
INTO THE
MIRACULOUS POWERS

Which are supposed to have subsisted in the

CHRISTIAN CHURCH,
From the EARLIEST AGES through several
successive CENTURIES.

By which it is shewn,

That we have no sufficient Reason to believe, upon
the Authority of the PRIMITIVE FATHERS,

That any such Powers were continued to the CHURCH,
after the Days of the APOSTLES.

P R Æ F A C E.

WHEN I first sent abroad my *Introductory Discourse*, this larger work, which I then promised, and now offer to the public, was actually prepared, and intended to have been published at the same time and in the same form, in which it now appears, with that Discourse prefixed to it. But when I recollected the great importance of the subject, which had never before been professedly examined; and that the part especially, which I had undertaken to defend, was not onely new, but contradictory to the general opinion, which prevails among Christians; and above all, that I had nothing to trust to in the management of it, but my own private judgement; I began to think it a duty, which candor and prudence prescribed, not to alarm the public at once with an argument so strange and so little understood; nor to hazard an experiment so big with consequences, till I had first given out some sketch or general plan of what I was projecting; so that all, who were disposed to examine it, might have notice and leisure, to inquire into the grounds of it, and qualify themselves to form a proper judgment of that evidence, which I might afterwards produce in its defence. I was

in hopes also, by this method, of reaping some benefit to myself, from the opportunity, which it would give, not onely of drawing out other people's sentiments, but, if any just cause should be offered, of changing even my own; while I kept it still in my power, either to drop the pursuit of my scheme, or to reform it, in such a manner, as any new light or better information might happen to direct me.

This was my view, in publishing a separate edition of the *Introductory Discourse*: which, as I easily foresaw, was sure to encounter all the opposition, that prejudice, bigotry, and superstition, are ever prepared to give to all free inquiries into opinions, which depend on the prevalence of their power. I was aware, that the very novelty of it would offend, and the matter of it still more: that many would rise up against it, and some of them by writing, others, by noise and clamor, try to raise a popular odium upon it; but my comfort was, that this would excite the candid inquirers also, to take it into their consideration, and to weigh the merit and consequences of it; and it was the judgement of these alone, by which I proposed to determine my future measures and resolution with regard to it.

The event has answered, not onely to my expectation, but to my wishes: for notwithstanding all, which has been published against it,
from

from the Prefs, the Pulpit, and the Theological Schools, the general approbation, which it has every where received from thofe, whofe authority I chiefly value, has given me the utmoft encouragement to perfevere in the profecution of my argument, as being of the greateft importance to the Proteftant religion, and the fole expedient which can effectually fecure it, from being gradually undermined, and finally fubverted by the efforts of *Rome*.

But befides the favorable reception, which it has met with both among the Clergy and the Layety, it was an unexpected fatisfaction to me, to be informed lately by a friend, that Mr. *Locke* had many years ago declared the fame opinion with mine, concerning *the miracles of the Primitive Church*, in a paragraph of his *third Letter on Toleration*; which I had never read or feen, but fhall now offer to the reader in his own words; being perfuaded, that the authority of fo eminent a writer, and fo fingularly qualified, by his talents and ftudies, to difcern the exact relations and confequences of things, will add great weight and confirmation to the caufe, which I am here defending.

“ And fo I leave you,” fays Mr. *Locke* to his Antagonift, “ to difpofe of the credit of Eccle-
 “ fiaftical writers, as you fhall think fit, and by
 “ your authority, to eftablifh or invalidate
 “ theirs, as you pleafe. But this, I think, is

“ evident, that he, who will build his faith or
 “ reasonings upon miracles delivered by Church
 “ Historians, *will find cause to go farther than the*
 “ *Apostles time, or else, not to stop at Constantin’s :*
 “ since the writers after that period, whose word
 “ we take, as unquestionable in other things,
 “ speak of miracles in their time with no less
 “ assurance, than the Fathers before the fourth
 “ century : and a great part of the miracles of
 “ the second and third centuries stand upon the
 “ credit of the writers of the fourth. So that,
 “ that sort of argument, which takes and rejects
 “ the testimony of the ancients at pleasure, as it
 “ may best suit with it, will not have much
 “ force with those, who are not disposed to em-
 “ brace the hypothesis, without any arguments
 “ at all [1].”

As to the writers, who have hitherto declared
 themselves against this opinion, signified here in
 short by Mr. *Locke*, and explained at large by my-
 self, they have shewn a great eagerness indeed,
 to distinguish their zeal, but a very little know-
 ledge of the quæstion, which they have under-
 taken to discuss ; urged by the hopes of those
 honors, which they have seen others acquire, by
 former attacks upon me ; and, like true soldiers
 of the militant Church, prepared to fight for
 every establishment, that offers such pay and
 rewards to its defenders. Who, from a blind
 deference to authority, think the credibility of a

[1] See Let. 3d. on Tolerat. c. x. p. 269.

witness sufficient to evince the certainty of all facts indifferently, whether natural or supernatural, probable or improbable; and knowing no distinction between faith and credulity, take a facility of believing, to be the surest mark of a sound Christian. Their arguments are conformable to their principles: for instead of entering into the merits of the cause, and shewing my opinion to be false or contradictory to any truth subsisting in the world, they think it a full confutation of it, to prove it contrary to the belief of the primitive ages, to the testimony of the ancient Fathers, and to the tradition of the Catholic Church: by the help of which venerable names, they insinuate fears and jealousies, of I know not what consequences, dangerous to Christianity, ruinous to the faith of History, and inductive of an universal Scepticism. Terrors purely imaginary; grounded on error and prejudice; which, if suffered to prevail, would produce consequences much more to be dreaded; subversive of all true Religion, as well as of every thing else, that is rational and virtuous among men. But after all their invectives, it is a pleasure to find them obliged, in the course of the debate, to confute their own clamors; and to declare at last with me, that, whatever be the fate of my argument, or were it allowed even to be true, the credit of the Gospel-miracles could not in any degree be shaken by it [1].

[1] See Remarks on two Pamphlets against the *Introd. Disc.* p. 8, 9.

But to speak my mind freely on the subject of consequences. I am not so scrupulous perhaps in my regard to them, as many of my profession are apt to be : my nature is frank and open, and warmly disposed, not onely to seek, but to speak what I take to be true, which disposition has been greatly confirmed by the situation, into which Providence has thrown me. For I was never trained to pace in the trammels of the Church, nor tempted by the sweets of its preferments, to sacrifice the philosophic freedom of a studious, to the servile restraints of an ambitious life : and from this very circumstance, as often as I reflect upon it, I feel that comfort in my own breast, which no external honors can bestow. I persuade myself, that the life and faculties of man, at the best but short and limited, cannot be employed more rationally or laudably, than in the search of knowledge ; and especially of that sort, which relates to our duty, and conduces to our happiness. In these Inquiries therefore, wherever I perceive any glimmering of truth before me ; I readily pursue, and endeavour to trace it to its source ; without any reserve or caution of pushing the discovery too far, or opening too great a glare of it to the public. I look upon the discovery of any thing which is true, as a valuable acquisition to society ; which cannot possibly hurt, or obstruct the good effect of any other truth whatsoever : for they all partake of one common essence, and necessarily

necessarily coincide with each other; and like the drops of rain, which fall separately into the river, mix themselves at once with the stream, and strengthen the general current.

The light of truth indeed is sure to expose the vanity of all those popular systems and prejudices, which are to be found in every country; derived originally from error, fraud, or superstition; and craftily imposed upon the many, to serve the interests of a few. Hence it is, that upon the detection of any of these, and especially of the religious kind, we see all that rage of fierce Bigots, hypocritical Zealots, and interested Politicians; and of all whose credit or fortunes in any manner depend on the establishment of error and ignorance among men: and hence, all those horrible massacres and persecutions, of which we frequently read, both in Pagan and Christian Countries, which, under the pretext of serving God, have destroyed so many thousands of his best servants. But truth was never known to be on the persecuting side, or to have had any other effect, than to promote the general good, and to co-operate with Heaven itself, in bringing us still nearer to the perfection of our being, and to the knowledge of that eternal rule of good and ill, which God originally marked out and prescribed to the nature of man. Let the consequences then of truth reach as far as they can; the farther they reach the better; the more errors they will detect, and the more they

they will dissipate of those clouds and mists, in which the crafty and interested part of mankind are apt to involve and disguise the real nature of things, from the view of their fellow creatures.

The present quæstion, concerning the reality of the miraculous powers of the primitive Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced by those powers, and of the witnesses, who attest them. If either part be infirm, their credit must sink in proportion; and if the facts especially be incredible, must of course fall to the ground: because no force of testimony can alter the nature of things. The credibility of facts lies open to the trial of our reason and senses, but the credibility of witnesses depends on a variety of principles, wholly concealed from us; and tho', in many cases, it may reasonably be presumed, yet in none, can it certainly be known. For it is common with men, out of crafty and selfish views, to dissemble and deceive; or, out of weakness and credulity, to embrace and defend with zeal, what the craft of others had imposed upon them: but plain facts cannot delude us; cannot speak any other language, or give any other information, but what flows from nature and truth. The testimony therefore of facts, as it is offered to our senses, in this wonderful fabric and constitution of worldly things, may properly be called the testimony of God himself; as it carries with it the surest instruction in all cases,

and to all nations, which in the ordinary course of his providence he has thought fit to appoint for the guidance of human life.

But before we procede to examine the particular facts and testimonies, which antiquity has furnished for the decision of this dispute, our first care should be, to inform ourselves of the proper nature and condition of these miraculous powers, which are the subject of it, as they are represented to us in the history of the Gospel: for till we have learnt from those sacred records, what they really were, for what purposes granted, and in what manner exerted by the Apostles and first possessors of them, we cannot form a proper judgement on those evidences, which are brought either to confirm or confute their continuance in the Church, and must dispute consequently at random, as chance or prejudice may prompt us, about things unknown to us.

And this indeed appears to be the case of all these zealous Champions, who have attempted to refute the *Introductory Discourse*. Among whom, I have not observed one, who seems to have spent a thought, in considering the origin and use of those powers, as they are set forth in the New Testament. They appeal indeed to the Text, in which they were promised by our Lord to his Disciples: where tho' there is not the least hint of any particular time, for which they were to last, yet this they supply from their own imagination,

nation, and by the help of a postulatam, which all people will grant, *that they continued as long, as they were necessary to the Church*, they presently extend that necessity to what length they please, or as far as they find it agreeable to the several systems, which they had previously entertained about them.

They urge especially that passage from St. *Mark*, in which our Lord, just ready to ascend into Heaven, and giving his last instructions to his Apostles, *to go and preach to all nations*, immediately adds; *And these signs shall follow them who believe: in my name they shall cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover* [1].

From these words, one of my Antagonists argues thus: “ It will here be observed, that this
 “ promise was not made to the Apostles person-
 “ ally, but to them, that should believe through
 “ their preaching, without any limitation of
 “ time for the continuance of these powers to
 “ their days. And when it is considered how
 “ great a part of the Heathen world remained
 “ unconverted after their days, it is no unrea-
 “ sonable supposition, that these powers did not
 “ expire with the Apostles, but were continued
 “ to their Successors, in the work of propagat-

[1] *Mark* xvi. 17.

“ing the Gospel. How long, I say not : and
 “perhaps there is not light enough in history,
 “to settle this point ; as indeed it nothing con-
 “cerns us. But the earliest Fathers unanimously
 “affirm, that these powers subsisted in the
 “Church in their days ; and why they are not
 “to be believed, it is the Author’s business to
 “shew [1].”

Another Advocate of the same cause makes the following remark on the same passage.
 “Our Saviour, before he left the world, pro-
 “mises these miraculous powers not onely to
 “the Apostles, but to private Christians : and
 “the rules and directions, which *St. Paul* after-
 “wards gave the *Corinthians*, concerning the
 “exercise of them, plainly shew, that they must
 “have continued some considerable time in the
 “Church. And as Christ’s promise is without
 “any limitation of time, we may reasonably
 “suppose that they lasted as long as the Church
 “had an immediate occasion for them, such as
 “the farther conversion of the world.”—For
 which purpose of converting those nations, who
 had not as yet heard of the Gospel, he declares
 it, “to be necessary, that the Successors of the
 “Apostles should be indued with miraculous
 “powers, especially with *the gift of tongues*,
 “without which they could not expect any con-
 “siderable success—and he concludes there-
 fore, “that it is highly probable, if not abso-

[1] See Observat. on the Introd. Dis. p. 25.

“lutely certain, that they did actually subſiſt in
 “the Church for ſome conſiderable time, after
 “the days of the Apoſtles [1].”

It being agreed then, that in the original promiſe of theſe miraculous gifts, there is no intimation of any particular period, to which their continuance was limited, the next quæſtion is, by what ſort of evidence the preciſe time of their duration is to be determined? But to this point one of the writers juſt referred to, excuſes himſelf, as we have ſeen, from giving any answer; and thinks it ſufficient to declare in general, that *the earlieſt Fathers unaniſmouſly affirm them to have continued down to their times.* Yet he has not told us, as he ought to have done, to what age he limits the character of *the earlieſt Fathers*; whether to the ſecond or to the third century, or, with the generality of our writers, means alſo to include the fourth. But to whatever age he may reſtrain it, the difficulty at laſt will be, to aſſign a reaſon, why we muſt needs ſtop there. In the mean while, by his appealing thus to the *earlieſt Fathers* onely, as unaniſmouſ on this article, a common reader would be apt to infer, that the later Fathers are more cold or diffident, or divided upon it; whereas the reverſe of this is true, and the more we deſcend from thoſe earlieſt Fathers, the more ſtrong and explicit we find their Succeſſors, in atteſting the perpetual ſucceſſion

[1] See Poſtſcript of a Treatiſe on Mirac. by Abr. Lemoine, p. 511, 512, 515.

and daily exertion of the same miraculous powers, in their several ages: so that if the cause must be determined by *the unanimous consent of Fathers*, we shall find as much reason to believe, that those powers were continued even to the latest ages, as to any other, how early and primitive soever, after the days of the Apostles.

But the same writer gives us two reasons, why he does not chuse to say any thing upon the subject of their duration: 1st, because, *there is not light enough in history, to settle it*: 2dly, because *the thing itself is of no concern to us*.

As to his first reason, I am at a loss to conceive, what farther light a professed Advocate of the primitive ages and Fathers can possibly require in this case. For as far as the Church-Historians can illustrate or throw light upon any thing, there is not a single point in all history, so constantly, explicitly, and unanimously affirmed by them all, as the continual succession of these powers through all ages, from the earliest Father, who first mentions them, down to the time of the Reformation. Which same succession is still farther deduced, by persons of the most eminent character, for their probity, learning, and dignity in the *Romish* Church, to this very day. So that the onely doubt, which can remain with us, is; whether the Church-Historians are to be trusted or not: for if any credit be due to them in the present case, it must reach

reach either to all, or to none : because the reason of believing them in any one age, will be found to be of equal force in all, as far as it depends on the characters of the persons attesting, or the nature of the things attested.

The second reason is still more ; *that the point of their duration is of no concern to us.* This indeed is strange, from a writer of his principles ; for if primitive antiquity, as all these champions contend, is to be the rule, of regulating the doctrines and discipline of all modern Churches, it must surely be of the utmost concern to us to know, how far it's authority may be trusted, and how far the hand of God continued to co-operate visibly with the saints of those ages, by giving a divine sanction to the doctrines, which they taught, and the rites, which they established. For that God did actually exert himself in such an extraordinary manner, in those primitive days, this writer affirms from the unanimous testimony of *the earliest Fathers* ; yet owns withal, that the same ages were imposed upon also by false and fictitious pretensions to miraculous powers. As far therefore, as it is our duty, to conform ourselves to the doctrines and usages of those early ages, so far it must be of great importance, to have a rule of distinguishing the true from the false ; of discerning those, which God had stamped with his authority for the common good of mankind, from those, which fraud and craft had imposed, for the private

vate interest of a few Impostors : towards which, nothing could afford more light and help to us, than to know the precise duration of true miracles, and to be able to pronounce, that they proceeded thus far and no farther. On my part, indeed, it might very consistently be said, that it is of no use to inquire or dispute how long those powers subsisted, since, according to my principles, they never subsisted at all, after the days of the Apostles : but when a writer affirms the Primitive Church to be a guide to us, and to have been indued with miraculous powers, for the confirmation of its divine authority, yet declares it of *no concern to us*, to know, how long those powers continued in it, or at what time God was pleased to withdraw them, on account of the prevailing corruptions and forgeries of the same Church, he acts not onely in contradiction to his own principles, but to reason and common sense, and betrays a great want either of judgement or sincerity.

The argument also, which these writers alledge for the continuance of miracles, and especially *of the gift of tongues, from the unconverted state of the Heathen world*, is not less impertinent and injudicious : because it might have been alledged as justly and with equal force, through all ages of the Church, from the Apostolic times down to our own ; and will justify the Romanists themselves in their pretensions to the same powers at this very day : since the greatest

part of this habitable Globe remains still in the same *unconverted state*; immerfed in grofs idolatry; without any knowledge of the true God, or light of the Gospel among them.

But in truth, this same confideration, *of the unconverted state of the Heathens*, was thought to have fo much weight in it by *Grotius*, as to perfuade him, from a parity, both of reason, and of evidence alfo, which was found in every age, that thefe extraordinary gifts were certainly continued to the later, as well as to the earlier times of the Church. Nay, he took the conversion of the Heathens, to be an occafion fo worthy of the divine interpoftion, as not to doubt, he fays, but, that *if any person were employed in it at this day, in a manner agreeable to the will of our Lord, he would find himfelf indued with a power of working miracles* [1]. From which declaration of, fo learned and judicious a Critic, we may obferve in the firft place, what I have elfewhere frequently fignified; how naturally the allowance of thofe powers to the earlier ages, will engage us, if we are confiftent with ourfelves, to allow the fame alfo to the later ages: and, in the fecond place, how fallacious the judgement

[1] Cum vero multo etiam feriora fecula plena fint testimonio ejus rei, nescio qua ratione moti quidam id donum ad prima tantum tempora retringant — Quare

fiquis nunc etiam Gentibus Christi ignaris — Christum, ita ut ipse annunciari voluit, annunciet, promissionis vim duraturam non dubito. In Marc. xvi. 17.

even of the wisest will ever be found, when deserting the path of nature and experience, and giving the reins to fancy and conjecture, they attempt to illustrate the secret counsels of Providence.

For experience has long taught us, that tho' all the different Churches and Sects of Christians, have sent abroad their several Missionaries, to propagate the Gospel among the remote and Idolatrous nations, yet none of them have ever been inabled to work a single miracle in confirmation of their mission. The Romanists indeed make a pretension to such a power, and boast of several miracles performed by their Missionaries in both the *Indies*: yet, as I have elsewhere observed, one of their gravest writers has openly acknowledged the vanity of such Pretensions; and one of their most eminent wonder-workers, St. *Francis Xavier*, called the *Apostle of the Indies*, laments, in some of his letters, “ that
 “ through his ignorance of the language of
 “ those nations, he found himself incapable of
 “ doing any service to the Christian cause, and
 “ was but little better than a mute Statue
 “ among them, till he could acquire some competent knowledge of it: for which purpose,
 “ he was forced to act the boy again, and apply
 “ himself to the task of learning the rudiments
 “ of it [1].”

[1] See Præf. Disc. to my Letter from *Rome*.

Now this *gift of tongues* is what the adversaries of my scheme lay the greatest stress upon. They declare it to be so peculiarly necessary to the propagation of the Gospel, that no considerable success could be expected without it; and from this necessity infer the certainty of its continuance after the days of the Apostles. But they will have the mortification to find, in the sequel of this work, their imaginary hypothesis effectually confuted by the evidence of real fact; and this very gift, of whose continuance they are so assured, to have been of all others, the most evidently and confessedly withdrawn, in the earliest ages of the Church. They will find, I say, that the single Father, who lays any claim to it, and one of the gravest and most venerable of them all, laments, like the *Romish Apostle of the Indies*, *his own want of it, in the work of propagating the Gospel among a rude and barbarous people*: and that, in all the succeeding ages, while all the other kinds of miraculous gifts are frequently celebrated, and affirmed to flourish still in great abundance, there is not a single instance to be met with of this, nor the least pretension made to it by any writer whatsoever.

From this fact, and many more of the same sort, which might be produced, the reader will observe, how rash and presumptuous it is, to form arguments so peremptorily upon the supposed necessity or propriety of a divine interposition,

fition, in this or that particular case; and to decide upon the views and motives of the Deity, by the narrow conceptions of human reason. Whereas the whole, which the wit of man can possibly discover, either of the ways or will of the Creator, must be acquired by a contrary method; not by imagining vainly within ourselves, what may be proper or improper for him to do; but by looking abroad, and contemplating, what he has actually done; and attending seriously to that revelation, which he made of himself from the beginning, and placed continually before our eyes, in the wonderful works, and beautiful fabric of this visible world,

There is another mistake, which is common to all these advocates of the primitive miracles, and the chief source of their prejudices against *the Introductory Discourse*; in taking it for granted, as they all do, that these miraculous powers, when they had once been conferred by our Lord, upon any of his Disciples, were ever after perpetually inherent in them, and ready to be exerted at their will and pleasure: whereas it is evident, from several instances, both of the collocation and exercise of them, which we find in the New Testament, that they were merely temporary and occasional; adapted to particular exigencies, thought worthy of them by our Lord; and imparted onely at the moment of their exertion, which, by some special impulse, was notified at the same time to the agent; and as soon

as those particular occasions were served, that they were withdrawn again or suspended, and the Agents reduced to the condition of all other men, and left to the guidance of their own natural prudence.

This, I say, is evident, from the account of these gifts and the effects of them, which is given to us in the Gospel; as it has been observed also and declared by some of the best Expositors. Thus *Grotius*, in his comment on our Lord's promise of them to all true believers, remarks; *that these wonderful faculties were severally distributed to each faithful Disciple; yet not so, as to be exerted of themselves, or at pleasure, but reserved to special occasions* [1.] And the same thing is signified by our Lord himself, in his first promise of them to his Apostles, when he sent them out, *two by two, to preach his Gospel to the Jews: on which occasion he tells them, that when they were brought before Governors and Kings, they should not take any thought, about what they were to say for themselves, for it would be given to them, in that very hour, what they should speak* [2]. And that it was not peculiar to the gift of language or tongues onely, to be given at the moment of it's exertion, but common likewise to all the rest, will be shewn, probably, on some other occasion,

[1] Non omnibus omnia, quæ se non semper quidem, —ita tamen cuilibet, ut fed data occasione explicaret. oportet, credenti aliqua tunc In Mar. xvi. 17.
data sit admirabilis facultas, [2] Mar. x. 19.

more at large in a particular treatise, which is already prepared by me, on that subject.

As this then was the state of those extraordinary powers, with which our Lord thought fit, to arm his Apostles, against the first struggles and difficulties of their mission; so in his more intimate conversations with them, we find him frequently inculcating as an essential qualification also for the same mission, the practice of all those moral virtues, which are peculiarly adapted to conciliate the favor and good will of men: a general benevolence, modesty, affability, gentleness of behaviour, with great circumspection and caution of giving offence. *Behold*, says he, *I send ye forth as sheep, in the midst of wolves: be ye wise therefore as serpents, and harmless as doves* [1]: as if he meant to admonish them, that they were not to be perpetually directed by divine impulses and inspirations, but left on many occasions to the ordinary direction of their own natural faculties: and that their success would depend as much on the purity of their lives, as the force of their wonderful works: and that the miraculous gifts, which were indulged to them, in this infancy of the Gospel, were intended to draw people's attention more strongly to the contemplation of their manners; and to make them reflect on the excellency of that doctrine, which produced such rare fruits, and offered such examples of innocence and

[1] Mat. x. 16.

sanctity, for the correction of a depraved and sinful world.

The writers however, of whom I am speaking, prepossessed with the notion of the perpetual inherence of those powers, in all, who had once been indued with them, harangue with great gayety on the folly, which they impute to me, of imagining, that they should all be extinguished in a moment, upon the death of the last of the Apostles. They observe, that St. *John* outlived all the rest near forty years; and that some of the most eminent and gifted of the other Disciples, who are mentioned in the Gospel, survived him also, and were employing themselves, in different parts of the earth, in propagating the Gospel, and working perpetual miracles for the conversion of Unbelievers; and it was incredible, that these powers, which they were exerting every hour, with such success and honor to the Christian cause, in all the principal Cities and countries of the world, and at so wide a distance from each other, should all fail them at once, and expire at that very instant, in which St. *John* happened to die at *Ephesus*.

But while they fancy themselves, to be displaying the force of their reasoning and eloquence, they are but exposing their own ignorance, not onely of the nature of those extraordinary powers, which are the ground of the
dispute,

dispute, but of the particular quæstion, against which they are disputing. For it is no where affirmed in the *Introductory Discourse*, as their way of arguing implies, that those powers either vanished instantaneously, upon the death of St. *John*; or subsisted even so long, as St. *John* remained alive: but the single point in dispute, as far as it arises from that Discourse, is, whether we have sufficient ground to believe, upon the testimony of the ancient Fathers, that they subsisted at all, after the days of the Apostles.

If the nature then of these powers be such, as I have signified above, and shall endeavour hereafter to demonstrate; and if what I am now disputing with regard to the same powers, should appear also to be true; some perhaps may be apt to demand, what it is, that we are to judge at last, concerning their real duration; and to what period we may reasonably venture to restrain them. And tho' such a demand be rather curious than pertinent, and the solution of it of no consequence to the point in debate; yet as we cannot help forming some opinion or other on all subjects, which have fallen under our particular observation, so I shall not scruple to declare in this, what I take to be the most probable, as far as I have been able to collect it, from the facts and instances relating to it, which are to be found in the New Testament: but I propose it only as a conjecture, which may excite others also, to search, and to guess for themselves,

ſelves, till they can hit upon ſomething more ſatisfactory. In the mean while, my opinion in ſhort is this; that in thoſe firſt efforts of planting the Goſpel, after our Lord's aſcenſion, the extraordinary gifts which he had promiſed, were poured out in the fullſt meaſure on the Apoſtles, and thoſe other Diſciples, whom he had ordained to be the primary Inſtruments of that great work; in order to inable them, more eaſily to over-rule the inveterate prejudices both of the Jews and Gentiles, and to bear up againſt the diſcouraging ſhocks of popular rage and perſecution, which they were taught to expect in this noviciate of their miniſtry. But in proceſs of time, when they had laid a foundation, ſufficient to ſuſtain the great ſabrick deſigned to be erected upon it, and, by an invincible courage, had conquered the firſt and principal difficulties; and planted Churches in all the chief Cities of the *Roman* Empire, and ſettled a regular miniſtry to ſuccede them, in the government of the ſame; it may reaſonably be preſumed, that as the benefit of miraculous powers began to be leſs and leſs wanted, in proportion to the increaſe of thoſe Churches, ſo the uſe and exerciſe of them began gradually to decline; and as ſoon as Chriſtianity had gained an eſtabliſhment in every quarter of the known world, that they were finally withdrawn, and the Goſpel left to make the reſt of its way, by its own genuin ſtrength, and the natural force of thoſe divine graces, with which it was ſo richly ſtored, *faith,*
hope,

hope, and *charity*: graces! which never fail to inspire all, who truly possess them, with a zeal and courage, which no terrors can daunt, nor worldly powers subdue. And all this, as far as I am able to judge, from the nature of the gifts themselves, and from the instances or effects of them, which I have any where observed, may probably be thought to have happened, while some of the Apostles were still living: who, in the times even of the Gospel, appear, on several occasions, to have been destitute of any extraordinary gifts: and of whose miracles, when we go beyond the limits of the Gospel, we meet with nothing in the later histories, on which we can depend, or nothing rather, but what is apparently fabulous. And as to St. *John* in particular, who survived all the rest, the whole, that is delivered of him with any probability, is, “ that he spent the last years of his life in writing his Gospel and Revelations, and in visiting and confirming all those Churches of *Asia*, which had been planted by himself and his brethren, and were allotted to him, as his peculiar province [1].” But in the miraculous kind, the principal story related of him, is *that being thrown, by the command of Domitian, into a caldron of boiling oil, he came out safe and unhurt from it*: in memory of which, a chapel was afterwards built, and is still remaining, as *the Latine Gate of Old Rome*; the spot, where the fact

[1] Vid. Testimonia de Johanne, præfixa Evangelio ejus a Millio, in Editione N. T.

is supposed to have happened; in which I saw the story of it represented in painting. Yet this, with a few other trifling tales, which are recorded of the same Apostle, may justly be considered, as the fiction of the later ages.

But to return once more to the subject of the following sheets. The reader will find in them none of those arts, which are commonly employed by disputants, either to perplex a good cause, or to palliate a bad one; no subtil refinements, forced constructions, or evasive distinctions; but plain reasoning grounded on plain facts, and published with an honest and disinterested view, to free the minds of men from an inveterate imposture, which, through a long succession of ages, has disgraced the religion of the Gospel, and tyrannized over the reason and senses of the Christian world. In the pursuit of which end, I have shewn, by many indisputable facts, that the ancient Fathers, by whose authority that delusion was originally imposed, and has ever since been supported, were extremely credulous and superstitious; possessed with strong prejudices and an enthusiastic zeal, in favor, not only of Christianity in general, but of every particular doctrine, which a wild imagination could ingraft upon it; and scrupling no art or means, by which they might propagate the same principles. In short, that they were of a character, from which nothing could be expected, that was candid and impartial;

tial ; nothing, but what a weak or crafty understanding could supply, towards confirming those prejudices, with which they happened to be possessed ; especially where religion was the subject, which, above all other motives, strengthens every bias, and inflames every passion of the human mind. And that this was actually the case, I have shewn also by many instances ; in which we find them roundly affirming as true, things evidently false and fictitious ; in order to strengthen, as they fancied, the evidences of the Gospel ; or to serve a present turn of confuting an adversary ; or of enforcing a particular point which they were laboring to establish.

The chief instrument, by which they acquired and maintained their credit in the world, was an appeal to *a divine and miraculous power*, as residing continually among them, and giving testimony to the truth of what they taught and practised. This is the particular question, which I have undertaken here to examine : and, I persuade myself, that, as far as a negative can be demonstrated, I have proved all their appeals and positive attestations to be unworthy of any credit ; mere words unsupported by facts ; and in many cases directly confuted by opposite facts and testimonies. For example ; among the miraculous gifts, which are expressly claimed by the Fathers, we find these three ; *the gift of raising the dead ; of speaking with tongues ; of understanding the holy Scriptures*. Now, with re-
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gard to the two first, the most signal and important of all gifts, after weighing all the circumstances relating to them, and all that antiquity has delivered concerning them, I find the strongest reason to be convinced, that there never was a genuin instance of either of them, in any age, after the days of the Apostles: which I collect, not onely from the improbability of the things themselves, as they are affirmed by the Fathers, but from facts also, which evince the contrary. And as to the third gift; it is allowed and frankly confessed by all, as well friends as enemies, that instead of a divine and infallible interpretation of the Scriptures, a most absurd and ridiculous method of interpreting them, was the very characteristic even of the earliest ages.

If any one therefore should be disposed to answer or confute, what I have affirmed in this book, he must take a different method, from what my antagonists have hitherto pursued; must not expect, to bear down facts with systems; and from the supposed integrity and piety of the Fathers, to infer the certainty of what they attest: but must refer us to instances which tally with their testimonies, and experimentally prove the truth of them. When any of the Fathers tell us then, *that many were raised from the dead in their days, in every place where there was a Christian Church, and lived afterwards several years among them; and that others were*
heard

heard to speak in all kinds of languages : these Answerers must shew, how those testimonies were verified by facts ; and what particular persons were so raised, and indued with languages ; or must alledge at least some special effects of those miracles, credibly reported by the ancient writers, either Heathens or Christians. Again, when any of them declare, *that they were enlightened by the grace of God, with the gift of understanding the Scriptures* : it must be shewn, that those specimens, which they have given as the fruit and proof of that gift, will justify such a pretension, and may reasonably pass for divinely inspired. This, I say, is the onely way of answering, which can satisfy men of sense ; and what alone can in any manner affect or invalidate the force of my argument.



T H E

Introductory Discourse.

IT is an opinion commonly received among Christians, and above all, among those of the *Romish* communion, that after the days of the Apostles, there resided still in the Primitive Church, through several successive ages, a divine and extraordinary power of working miracles, which was frequently and openly exerted, in confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, and for the conviction of unbelievers. This is generally alledged by the Divines of all Churches, in their disputes with the Sceptics, as a subsidiary proof of the Divinity of the Christian Doctrine; and as it is managed by the Church of *Rome*, is rendered more persuasive and affecting to the multitude, than what the Gospel itself affords, by deducing the succession of those apostolical gifts down to our own times, and offering the testimony of the same miracles to the senses even of the present Age.

This then being universally adopted by the Papists, as an indisputable fact, or an article rather of the Christian Faith; and espoused likewise in part by the Protestants, as subservient in some degree to the Christian cause, I thought it

my duty to inquire into the grounds of it. For as it is the part of every Christian, to inform himself, as far as he is able, of every thing which his religion requires him, either to believe or to practise, so it is more especially of those, whom Providence has blessed with a capacity, and leisure, and the opportunities of inquiring; nor yet merely for their own information, but for the instruction likewise of others, who want the same advantages.

It was this which gave rise to the present inquiry, and what induced me also, to publish the result of it. I was not led to the one, by an idle curiosity; nor to the other, by the vanity of combating established opinions, but the duty of declaring my own: which, by the most impartial judgement, that I am able to form, I take not onely to be true, but useful also, and even necessary to the defence of Christianity, as it is generally received, and ought always to be defended, in Protestant Churches.

But if the facts and testimonies, which obliged me to embrace it, should not have the same force, nor suggest the same reflections to others, I shall neither be surprized nor concerned at it: for it is every man's right to judge for himself; and a difference of opinion is as natural to us, as a difference of taste: and when the sensual faculties are perpetually passing different judgements on the same objects in different

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men, it cannot be thought strange, that the intellectual, in which nature seems to have formed a greater disparity, should act with the same variety. But if, to the principles implanted in our nature, we add that peculiar biases, which every individual receives from education, example, or habit; and consider what strong prejudices, a zeal for opinions once imbibed, or an interest especially accruing from them, is apt to instil even into the better sort, we should have cause rather to wonder, that any number of men should ever be of one mind, in any question of difficulty or importance. Hence contrary doctrines in religion are frequently deduced from the same texts, and contrary systems of politics, from the same monuments.

Whatever judgement therefore any other man may form, or whatever he may write, on the subject of this performance, I shall not easily be drawn into any controversy with him about it: but contenting myself with the discharge of my own conscience, by this free declaration of my real sentiments, and indulging the same liberty to every body else, shall leave the rest to the judgement of the public. I do not mean however, by this profession, to preclude myself so intirely from all farther concern with the present argument, as not to be ready on all occasions, to acknowledge any mistake, of which I may be convinced, in the representation of any fact, or testimony, or character, which I have applied to

the support of it, and to retract it, in the same publick manner, in which I committed it.

But besides that general obligation, which is common to me with all other Christians, of searching into the origin and evidences of our religion, I found myself particularly excited to this task, by what I had occasionally observed and heard, of the late growth of Popery in this Kingdom, and the great number of Popish books, which have been printed and dispersed amongst us, within these few years: in which their writers make much use of that prejudice, in favor of *primitive antiquity*, which prevails even in this Protestant Country, towards drawing weak people into their cause, and shewing their worship to be the best, because it is the most conformable to that ancient pattern. But the most powerful of all their arguments, and what gains them the most profelytes, is, their confident attestation of miracles, as subsisting still in their Church, and the clear succession of them, which they deduce through all history, from the Apostolic times, down to our own. This their Apologists never fail to display, with all the force of their rhetoric; and with good reason; since it is a proof, of all others, the most striking to vulgar minds, and the most decisive indeed to all minds, as far it is believed to be true.

Thus

Thus one of their principal Champions, with whom I have been engaged, demonstrates the orthodoxy of their faith, and their true descent from that Church, to which our Lord has promised his presence to the end of the world. For speaking of the miracles of the Pagans, which I had opposed to those of the Papists, he says, “ God has been pleased in every age, to work
 “ far more evident miracles in his Church, by
 “ the ministry of his Saints ; in raising the dead
 “ to life ; in curing the blind and the lame ; in
 “ casting out Devils ; in healing in a moment
 “ inveterate diseases, and the like stupendous
 “ works of his power ; attested by the most
 “ authentic monuments ; and very frequently,
 “ as may be seen in the acts of the canonization
 “ of Saints, by the depositions of innumerable
 “ eye-witnesses, examined upon oath ; and by
 “ the public notoriety of the facts : which kind
 “ of miracles, so authentically attested, will be
 “ to all ages a standing evidence, that the
 “ Church, in whose communion they have all
 “ been wrought, is not that idolatrous, pagan
 “ Church, which the Doctor pretends, but the
 “ true spouse of Christ [a].” And in a second

[a] See *Catholic Christian*, Præf. xviii.

N. B. I have been well informed, that among the deserters from the *English* army in *Flanders*, who were taken in the time of the late rebel-

lion, and shot to death in *London*, there was one, who professed to die in the *Romish* Communion, and being asked by the Clergyman, who assisted him, what were the motives, which induced him

piece, which the same writer has since published, he promises to give us an *history of the Christian miracles* in a particular treatise, deduced, I suppose, from the earliest ages, down to the present.

Now *these pious cheats of the Romish Church*, as Mr. Leslie says, *are the sorest disgraces of Christianity, and bid the fairest of any one contrivance to overturn the certainty of the miracles of Christ, and the whole truth of the Gospel, by putting them all upon the same foot* [b]. This history therefore of miracles, which is promised by that writer, induced me, more particularly at this time, to inquire into the genuine state and succession of them, through all the several ages of the Christian Church, from the times of the Apostles; in order to discover the precise period and dura-

to forsake the religion in which he was bred, made answer, "That a Priest of a very grave and civil behaviour had assured him, that miracles had been wrought in confirmation of the Popish doctrine, and particularly, that a Protestant woman came one day to their Sacrament, with intent to make sport with it, and instead of swallowing the consecrated bread, found means to convey it into her pocket; but when she was

"making merry afterwards in company, with what she had done, and was going to produce the piece of bread, which she had pocketed, she found it changed into real flesh and blood." And he added, "that there was no reason to imagine, that a person, of so renowned a character, could have any design or interest, to deceive him in the attestation of such a miracle."

[b] See *Leslie's Short method*, Vol. I. p. 24.

tion of them; and to settle some rule of discerning the true from the false; so as to be able to give a proper reason, for admitting the miracles of one age, and rejecting those of another.

It must be confessed, however, in the first place, that this claim of a miraculous power, which is now peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, was universally asserted and believed in all Christian countries, and in all ages of the Church, till the time of the Reformation. For Ecclesiastical History makes no difference between one age and another; but carries on the succession of its miracles, as of all other common events, through all of them indifferently, to that memorable period. But the light of the Reformation dispelled the charm: and what *Cicero* says of the *Pythian Oracle*, may be as truly said of the Popish miracles; *when men began to be less credulous, their power vanished* [c]. For that spirit of inquiry, with which Christendom was then animated, detected the cheat, and exposed to public view, the hidden springs and machinery of those lying wonders, by which the world had been seduced and enslaved to the tyranny of *Rome* [d].

[c] Quando autem ista vis evanuit, an postquam homines minus creduli esse cœperunt? Cic. De Divin. ii. 57.

[d] Some of their Images were brought to *London*, and

publicly broken there at *St. Paul's Cross*, in the sight of the people; that they might be fully convinced of the juggling imposture of the Monks. And in particular,

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And as the miracles of that age could not stand the test of a scrutiny, but were found, upon trial, to be the forgeries of a corrupt Clergy, so it gave just cause to suspect, that those *golden legends* of them, as they were called, which had been transmitted to them from their Ancestors, were of no better stamp, and that the Church of Christ had long been governed by the same arts. This also was found to be true by those, who made it their business to search into the records of past ages: where, though it was easy to trace the marks of the same fictions, exerted in the same manner, and for the same ends, even up to the early times of the primitive Church, yet it was difficult, to fix the origin of them, or to mark the precise æra, in which the cheat first began.

Many learned men among the Protestants have attempted indeed to settle this point; but with so little success, as to leave it at last as uncertain as they found it; none of them having

the *Crucifix of Boxley in Kent*, commonly called *the Rood of Grace*; to which many pilgrimages had been made; because it was observed sometimes to bow, and to lift itself up; to shake and stir its head, hands and feet; to rowl its eyes; move the lips; and bend its brows: all which were looked upon by the abused multitude, as the effects of a divine power. These were now publicly discovered to have been cheats. For the springs were shewed, by which all these motions were made, &c. See *Burnet's History of the Reformation*, Vol. I. 242.

been

been able to adjust the exact limits between true and false miracles, or to shew, by any solid reason, how long after the days of the Apostles, the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit continued in the Church, or in what age they were actually withdrawn.

The most prevailing opinion is, that they subsisted through the three first Centuries, and then ceased in the beginning of the fourth; or as soon as Christianity came to be established by the civil power. This, I say, seems to be the most prevailing notion at this day, among the generality of the Protestants; who think it reasonable to imagine, that miracles should then cease, when the end of them was obtained, and the Church no longer in want of them; being now delivered from all danger, and secure of success, under the protection of the greatest power on earth.

Agreeably to this notion, Archbishop *Tillotson* says, “ that on the first planting of the Christian religion in the world, God was pleased
 “ to accompany it with a miraculous power;
 “ but after it was planted, that power ceased,
 “ and God left it to be maintained by ordinary
 “ ways.” And in another place, speaking of the particular gift of *casting out Devils*, he observes, “ that it continued the longest of any,
 “ and there was reason that it should continue,
 “ as long as the Devil reigned, and Pagan Idol-
 atry

“ atry was kept up.—But when the powers of
 “ the world became Christian, and Satan’s
 “ kingdom was every where destroyed, then
 “ this miraculous gift also ceased, there being
 “ no farther occasion for it [e].” The late Dr.
Marshall also, who translated the works of St.
Cyprian into english, taking notice of the conti-
 nuance of miracles and supernatural gifts, and
 especially of *prophecies and visions*, in that *Cypri-
 anic* age, declares, “ that there are successive
 “ evidences of them, which speak full and home
 “ to this point, from the beginning of Christi-
 “ anity down to the age of *Constantine*, in whose
 “ times, when Christianity had acquired the
 “ support of human powers, those extraordina-
 “ ry assistances were discontinued [f].” Yet
 this opinion, though generally received by the
 Protestants, is found liable still to such objec-
 tions, and perplexed with such difficulties, that
 even those, who principally espouse it, cannot
 wholly acquiesce in it, but are forced to propose
 it with some reserve and exception.

Mr. *Dodwell*, one of the most zealous admi-
 rers of primitive Antiquity, and who has dedu-
 ced the history of its miracles with the greatest
 accuracy, through the three first Centuries,
 closes his account of them, with the conversion
 of the Roman Empire to Christianity; not
 daring, as he frequently declares, to venture any

[e] Serm. Fol. 3. it. Vol. iii. p. 488. Edit. 1735. [f] Epi-
 stles of *Cypr.* VII. not. b.

farther,

farther, on account of *the fabulous genius and manifest impostures of the fourth Century* [g]. But though he supposes the true miracles to have generally ceased from that time, yet he finds some particular instances of them, so strongly attested by the Fathers of the best credit, thro' the rest of the same century, that he cannot but admit them, as exceptions to his general rule [b].

Mr. *Whiston* contends, “ that these miracu-
 “ lous powers were totally withdrawn at the
 “ very time when the *Athanasian Heresy*, as he
 “ calls it, was established by the second coun-
 “ cil of *Constantinople*, about *A. D. 381*: and
 “ that as soon as the Church became *Atha-*
 “ *nasian, Antichristian, and Popish*, they ceased
 “ immediately, and the Devil lent it his own
 “ cheating and fatal powers in their stead [i].”

[g] Fateor ibi multa legi,
 quarti seculi impostorumque
 genium referentia, ut nolim
 ea certioribus immiscere—
 Quam fuerint quarti seculi
 Scriptores fabulis dediti, è
uita Pauli Hieronymiana; &
Athanasiana Antonii, &c. in-
 telligimus. Dissert. in Iren.
 ii. § LV.

Ex ipsa miraculorum histo-
 ria satis constat, a quarto tan-
 dem seculo & temporibus *Eu-*
sepii, sensim decreuisse vera,
 & in desuetudinem abiisse mi-
 racula. ib. LIX.

Ego me infra prima secula
 contineo, ante receptam in
 Imperio Christianitatem, &c.
 ib. LXII.

[b] *Chrysofomus* — fatetur
 suo etiam tempore non-
 nulla fuisse signa, sed & nu-
 mero pauca, & locis variis
 hinc inde dispersa.—Qui hæc
 itaque agnovit negatis tamen
 aliis, erat proculdubio & illa
 agniturus, si pari omnia evi-
 dentia consisterent. ib. LIX.

[i] See his Account of *the*
Dæmoniacks, p. 65.

Dr. *Waterland*, on the other hand, the perpetual defender of *Athanasius*, in his treatise on *the importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, often affirms, “ that the miraculous powers of the “ Church continued through the three first centuries at least, as a manifest proof, that the “ true faith was there preserved, where the spirit “ of truth so visibly resided [k]: and in the addenda to the same work, he corrects himself, as it were, for a mistake, in confining them to such narrow limits, which, on the authority of *Paulinus*, he endeavours to extend, *to the latter end of the fourth century* [l].

Dr. *Chapman* declares, “ that though the “ establishment of Christianity by the civil “ power, abated the necessity of miracles, and “ occasioned a visible decrease of them, yet after that revolution, there were instances of “ them still, as public, as clear, as well attested, “ as any in the earlier ages [m].”

And not content, like Dr. *Waterland*, with carrying the succession of them to the end of the fourth century, he goes on to assure us, *that the fifth also had its portion, though smaller than the fourth* [n]: which he confirms by several instances, drawn from the middle of that

[k] See, p. 299, 382, 383, 423. [m] See *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 170.

[l] *Ibid.* p. 497.

[n] *Ibid.* p. 173.

fifth century, and then refers us to Dr. *Berriman*, for the accurate defence of another miracle, wrought in confutation of the *Arian Heresy*, which brings us to the end of it [o].

Thus these eminent Divines, pursuing their several systems, and ambitious of improving still upon each other's discoveries, seem unwarily to have betrayed the Protestant cause, by transferring the miraculous powers of the Church; the pretended insigns of truth and orthodoxy, into the hands of its enemies; and yielding up this sacred depositum, like the old *Ancilia of Pagan Rome*, to the defence and support of *Popish Rome*. For it was in these very primitive ages, and especially in the *third, fourth, and fifth centuries*, those *flourishing times of miraculous powers*, as Dr. *Chapman* calls them, in which the chief corruptions of Popery were either actually introduced, or the seeds of them so effectually sown, that they could not fail of producing the fruits which we now see. By these corruptions I mean, *the institution of Monkery; the worship of reliques; invocation of Saints; prayers for the Dead; the superstitious use of Images; of the Sacraments; of the Sign of the Cross; and of consecrated oil*; by the efficacy of all which rites, and as a proof of their divine origin, perpetual miracles are affirmed to have been wrought in these very centuries.

[o] Ibid. p. 175.

For example; Monkery had its beginning in the third, and a full establishment in the fourth century: in which all the principal Fathers of the Church, both *Greek* and *Latin*, employed their authority and eloquence, to extol the perfection and recommend the practice of it; by writing the lives of particular Monks; celebrating their wonderful sanctity and miraculous gifts; and founding monasteries also, where-ever they travelled. *St. Athanasius* was one of the first, who, from the pattern of the *Ægyptian* Monasteries, introduced them into *Italy and Rome*, where they had been held before in utter contempt [p]. *St. Basil* calls it an *Angelical institution: a blessed and Evangelic life, leading to the mansions of the Lord* [q]. *St. Jerom* declares, *the Societies of Monks and Nuns, to be the very flower and most precious stone among all the ornaments of the Church* [r]. *St. Chrysostom* calls it, *a way of life worthy of heaven, nor at all inferior to that of Angels* [s]. And *St. Austin*

[p] Ignominiosum, ut tunc putabatur, & vile in populis nomen—Hieron. Oper. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 780. Edit. Benedict.

[q] Basil. Oper. Tom. iii. p. 101, 261, 310, 473.

[r] Certe flos quidam & pretiosissimus lapis inter Ecclesiastica ornamenta, Monachorum & Virginum chorus est. Hieron. ib. p. 551.

[s] Καὶ γὰρ πολεμίαν ἕξαιψ στέπασαι εἰλαίῳ, καὶ ἀγίλων εὐδὲν χεῖρον διάκεινται. Chryf. Oper. Tom. i. p. 94. A. Edit. Benedict.

N. B. This same Father wrote three books against the *Oppugners of the Monastic life*; [Oper. T. i. p. 44.] and a separate one besides, to prove it to be preferable even to that of a King. [ib. p. 116.] files

stiles them always, in a peculiar manner, *the Servants of God* [t]. By the influence therefore of these Fathers, and the many lies and forged miracles, which they diligently propagated in honor of the Monks, innumerable Monasteries, as they themselves tell us, were over the *eastern World*; but especially in *Syria, Palestine, and Egypt*; whose deserts were covered with them; and where, in the next age, there were some, which are said to have had *five thousand Monks* in them [u].

Among many other instances of this preference, he observes that a King, when deposed and fallen from his throne, cannot recover it without the utmost difficulty; whereas a Monk, who falls from his virtue, quickly recovers it by his penitence: of which he gives a curious example, in a story, which he relates in another place, of an old Monk, who, after he had nobly sustained all the difficulties and fatigues of that discipline, was caught at last by the wiles of Satan, and fired with so violent a concupiscence for women, that he ran away from his Cell, to a bawdy-house in the neighbouring City, in order to quench his flame: where he had no sooner satiated his lust, than returning presently to his duty, he became so

strict a penitent, that within a short time after, when the country was afflicted with a famine, the people were directed by an express revelation from heaven, to apply to him, as the onely person, who could relieve them from it by his prayers; by the force of which, the famine was accordingly averted. *Ibid.* 29, 30.

[t] *De Servis Dei* scriptissime dicitur, tot annos ille in hoc vel in illo Monasterio fedit. August. Serm. 215. Op. T. v. p. 947. D. Edit. Bened.

Cupiebas in ea vita vivere, in qua *Servi Dei*, Monachi vivunt. Epist. ad Bonifac. 220. T. ii. p. 812.

[u] Exemplo itaque ejus, per totam Palæstinam innumerable Monasteria esse ceperunt. [Hieron. Op. T. iv. par. 2. p. 84.] Quid refera-

As to *the reliques of the Martyrs*, we find St. *Chrysoſtom* frequently haranguing on the great blessings, which the Church reaped from them, and the daily miracles which were wrought by them [x]: and he concludes one of his Homilies, on Two female Martyrs, *Bernice and Proſdoce*, in the following manner; “with this ardor, therefore, let us fall down before their reliques: let us embrace their coffins; for these may have some power, since their bones have so great an one: and not onely on the day of their Festival, but on other days likewise, let us fix ourselves as it were to them, and entreat them to be our patrons [y]:” and in his other Homilies, he often uses the same peroration “to dwell in their Sepulchres, to fix themselves to their coffins; that not onely their bones, but their tombs, and their urns also overflowed with benedictions [z].”

St. *Basil* informs us, “that all, who were pressed with any difficulty or distress, used to fly for relief to the tombs of the Martyrs; and whosoever did but touch their reliques, acquired some share of their sanctity [a].” In

mus Armenios, quid Persas, quid Indix & Æthiopiæ populos, ipsamque juxta Ægyptum, fertilem Monachorum — cunctaque Orientis examina — ibid. p. 551.

[x] ἵναρα μὲν τὸ λόγον πειρώσασθαι, ἢ τὸ καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέ-

ραν ὑπὸ τῶν μαρτύρων γυνόμενα θαύματα. Chryf. Op. T. ii. p. 555. Ed. Bened.

[y] Ibid. p. 645. C.

[z] Ibid. p. 669. E.

[a] Basil. Op. T. ii. p. 155. it. T. iii. 536.

the same age also, when *Vigilantius*, a learned and eminent Presbyter of the Church wrote a book just as a Protestant would now write, against the institution of Monks; the celibacy of the Clergy; praying for the Dead, and to the Martyrs; adoring their Reliques; celebrating their Vigils; and lighting up candles to them after the manner of the Pagans; St. Jerom, who answers him, defends all those rites with a most outrageous zeal and acrimony of language, and treats *Vigilantius*, as a most profligate Heretic, uttering the blasphemies, with which the Devil had inspired him against the sacred doctrines of the Church:

“ Answer me, says he, how it comes to pass,
 “ that in this vile dust and ashes of the Mar-
 “ tyrs, there is so great a manifestation of signs
 “ and wonders. I see, thou most wretched of
 “ mortals, what thou art so grieved at, what so
 “ afraid of; that unclean spirit, which compels
 “ thee to write thus, has oft been tortured, and
 “ even now is tortured by this vile dust [b].”

St *Austin* also affirms, “ that at *Milan*, while he
 “ was there present, the reliques of the Martyrs,
 “ *Protasius* and *Gervasius*, which lay buried in a
 “ place unknown, were reveled to St. *Ambrose*
 “ in a dream; and that by the touch onely of
 “ the same reliques, a blind man was restored to
 “ his sight; of which the whole people was
 “ witness, who flocked in crouds to the bodies
 “ of the said Martyrs [c].”

[b] Hieron. tom. iv. par.
 ii. p. 285, 286.

[c] Immenso populo teste
 res gesta est. De Civ. Dei,

In the sacrament also of *the Eucharist*, several strange abuses were introduced long before this fourth age. In *Justin Martyr's* time, within fifty years after the days of the Apostles, *the cup was constantly mixed with water, and a portion of the consecrated elements sent also to the absent* [d]: which soon became the source of much Superstition. For that mixture, considered at first as prudential onely, and indifferent, is declared by *Ireneus*, to have been taught and practised by our Saviour [e]; and by *St. Cyprian*, to have been enjoined to himself by a divine revelation [f]. The consecrated bread also, which was sent at first onely to the sick, was in *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days, carried home by the communicants, and locked up in boxes as a divine treasure for their private use [g]. From this time it began to work Miracles; and was applied to

lib. xvii. c. 3. Vid. etiam Hieron. ibid. p. 552. Samaritanam pergere, & Johannis Baptistæ, & Elifai, & Abdiæ pariter cineres adorare.

[d] Just. Mart. Apol. i. p. 96. Edit. Thirlb.

[e] Accipens panem, suum corpus esse constebatur; & temperamentum calicis, suum sanguinem confirmavit. Iren. l. iv. c. 37. it. l. v. c. 2, & 36.

[f] Nec nos pures, nostra & humana conferbere, aut

ultronea voluntate hoc nobis audacter assumere—admonitos autem nos scilicet, ut in calice offerendo Domini traditio servetur—ut calix, qui in commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino offeratur. Epist. ad Cæcil. lxxiii. Edit. Rigalt.

[g] Cum quædam arcam suam, in qua Domini sanctum fuit, manibus indignis tentaret aperire, igne inde surgente deterrita est. Cypri. de lapsis, p. 176.

drive Devils out of haunted houfes [b]; and carried with them by people, in their journeys and voyages, as an amulet or charm, to fecure them from all dangers both by fea and land [i].

This Sacrament was adminiftred likewise, in all their public communions, to infants, even of the tenderest age, before they were able to fpeak [k]: and was constantly ftyled, *the Sacrifice of the body of Chrift*; which was always offered

[b] Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula, in ejus nomine, five per Sacramenta ejus, &c. *Vid. Auguft. de Civ. D.* xxii. 8. § 1, 6.

[i] *St. Ambrose* relates a remarkable instance of this, in the cafe of one of his intimate friends, called *Satyrius*; who was a pious and zealous Christian, but had not yet received the Sacrament, or *been initiated*, as he calls it, in *the more perfect myfteries*. In this ftate, he happened to fuffer Shipwreck in his paffage from Afric, and the Ship itfelf to be broken to pieces, upon which, fays *Ambrose*, “*Satyrius* not being afraid of death, but to die only, before he had partaken of thofe myfteries, begged of fome of the company, who had been initiated, that they

“ would lend him the divine
 “ Sacrament (which they
 “ carried about with them)
 “ not to feed his curiofity,
 “ by peeping into the infide
 “ of the Box, but to obtain
 “ the benefit of his Faith,
 “ for he wrapped up the
 “ Myfteries in his Hander-
 “ chief, and then tying it
 “ about his neck, threw him-
 “ felf into the Sea; never
 “ troubling himfelf to look
 “ out for a plank, which
 “ might help him to fwim,
 “ fince he wanted nothing
 “ more, than the Arms of
 “ his Faith: nor did his
 “ Hopes fail him, for he was
 “ the firft of the company,
 “ who got fafe to the Shore.”
De Exceffu Satyri, l. i. § 43,
 44. p. 1125. Op. T. ii. Ed.
 Bened.

[k] *Cypr. ibid.* p. 175.

up, as Cyprian says, for the Martyrs, in their annual Festivals: as it was also, according to St. Jerom, by the Bishop of Rome, over the venerable bones of St. Peter and St. Paul [l]. Hence flowed those amazing titles, which were given to it in this fourth age; of most tremendous mystery; dreadful solemnity; terrible to Angels; Mystic table [m]; whose very Utensils and sacred coverings, as St. Jerom says, were not to be considered, like things inanimate, and void of sense, to have no sanctity, but to be worshiped with the same majesty, as the body and blood of our Lord [n]. And what is all this, but a description of that Sacrifice of the Mass, which the Romanists offer at this day, both for the living and the dead; and the same miraculous tales, which they still relate, of their transubstantiated bread?

The custom of *praying for the dead*, had also a very early origin: for it was common, as we

[l] Sacrificia pro eis semper, ut meministis, offerimus, quoties Martyrum passiones & dies, anniversaria commemoratione celebramus. Id. Epist. xxxiv. p. 48. Vid. it. Hieron. T. iv. par. ii. p. 284.

[m] Ἐπὶ αὐτῶν πάλιν φρικωδεστάτων μυστηρίων. [Chrysof. Oper. T. x. p. 568.] τεραπέζης καὶ σφύρα φρικωδεστάτης. [Ib. p. 245. D.] ἦν καὶ Ἁγέλλοι φρίτθουσι. Id. T. xi. p. 22. C.

[n] Ut discant, qui ignorant,—qua debeant veneratione sancta suscipere, & altaris Christi ministerio deservire: sacrosque calices, & sancta velamina, & cetera, quæ ad cultum Dominicæ passionis pertinent, non quasi inania & sensu carentia, sanctimoniam non habere, sed ex consortio corporis & sanguinis Domini, eadem qua corpus ejus & sanguis majestate veneranda. Hieron.

learn from *Tertullian*, even in the second century [o]; and became the universal practice of the following ages: so that in the fourth, we find it reckoned as a sort of *Heresy*, to deny the efficacy of it [p]. The purpose of it was to procure relief and refreshment to the departed souls, in some intermediate state of expiatory pains, which, according to the opinion of those times, all men were to suffer for their sins, except the Martyrs, and Saints of the first class [q]. A doctrine and practice, which could not fail of giving birth to the Popish Purgatory.

Ep. 88. ad Theophil. T. iv. par. ii. 728.

[o] Enimvero & pro anima ejus orat, & refrigerium interim adpostulat ei, & in prima resurrectione consortium, & offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus. De Monogam. x. p. 682. A. Edit. Nic. Rigalt. N. B. This passage may want a little explanation. *Tertullian*, in this treatise, is labouring to prove, that the second marriages of Christians are utterly unlawful, and forbidden to them by the Gospel, and though the parties be separated from each other by the death of either, that the matrimonial bond still subsists, and obliges the Survivor:

For the widow, says he, *prays for the Soul of her departed husband; and begs refreshment for him in his intermediate state; and to be a partner with him in the first resurrection; and makes an oblation for him every year, on the Day of his death.* By all which she acknowledges and keeps up her conjugal union, and cannot therefore marry any other man; because, to have one husband in the Spirit and another in the Flesh, is adultery, &c.

[p] Vid. Epiphani. Hæres. lxxv. § 3 & 7.

[q] Vid. Orig. con. Celsum, l. vi. p. 292. Tertull. De Anim. c. 55, 58.

The *Sign of the Cross* likewise, was the subject of much superstition in those ages. “Every step that we take, says Tertullian; when we come in or go out; put on our cloaths, or our shoes; when we bathe, eat, light up candles, go to bed, or sit down; we mark our foreheads with the sign of the Cross. “If for these, and other acts of discipline of the same kind, you demand a text of Scripture, you will find none; but tradition will be alledged to you, as the prescriber of them [r].” It was thought a sure preservative against all sorts of malignity, poisons, or fascination; and effectual to drive away evil spirits; and is affirmed by the principal Fathers of the fourth century, to have wrought many illustrious miracles. “This sign, says St. Chrysestom, both in the days of our Forefathers, and in our own, has thrown open gates, that were shut; destroyed the effects of poisonous drugs; dissolved the force of hemlock; and cured the bites of venomous beasts [s].”

[r] Ad omnem profectum atque promotum; ad omnem aditum atque exitum, ad vestitum, ad calciatum, ad lavacra, ad mensas, ad lumina, ad cubilia, ad sedilia, quæcumque nos conversatio exercet, frontem crucis signaculo terimus. Harum & aliarum ejusmodi dis-

ciplinæ si legem expostules Scripturarum, nullam invenies, traditio tibi prætendetur auctrix, &c. De Coron. iii.

[s] ὕπο τὸ σημεῖον ἢ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἡμῶν, ἢ ἐν δόξαις ἀνεξέπετασμα, &c. T. vii. p. 552. A.

The *sacred oil* also of the Church, was held in great veneration in these same days, as an universal remedy in all diseases. For which purpose, it was either prepared and dispensed by Priests and holy Monks; or was taken from *the lamps* which were burning before the reliques of the Martyrs. St. *Jerom* mentions great numbers, who had been cured of *the bites of venomous animals*, by touching their wounds with the first sort [t]: And St. *Chrysoſtom* speaks of many, who had been healed of their distempers, by anointing themselves with the second [u]. And St. *Auſtin* affirms, from his own knowledge, that a young woman had been freed from the Devil; and a young man restored even from death to life, by the use of it [x].

Lastly, as to *Images and Pictures*, it appears from St. *Chrysoſtom*, that great numbers of them were standing in the principal Churches of that

[t] Benedicto itaque oleo universi agricolæ atque pastores, tangentes vulnera, certam salutem resumebant. Vit. S. Hilarion. Op. T. iv. par. ii. p. 86.

[u] Καὶ ἵσασιν ἕσσι μετὰ πόντος καὶ ἰκαίως ἐλάτῃ χειροσάνωνι νοσήματα ἐθεσαν. Chryf. ib. p. 337. C.

[x] Hipponensem quandam Virginem scio, cum se oleo perunxisset, cui pro illa

orans Presbyter instillaverat lacrymas suas, mox a Dæmonio fuisse sanatam. [De Civ. D. I. xxii. c. 8. § 8.]

Rurfus apud nos, *Irenæi* cujusdam filius ægritudine extinctus est. Cumque corpus jaceret exanimum, atque exequiæ pararentur, amicorum quidam suggestit, ut ejusdem Martyris oleo, corpus perungeretur. Factum est, & revixit. Ibid. § 18.

age [y]; and from the other writers of the same age; that the acts of the Saints and Martyrs began to be painted on the walls of those particular Churches, which were dedicated to their names [z]: and it is natural to imagine, that they would not long be considered, as mere ornaments, or memorials, or books, as they were called, for the illiterate, but would gradually acquire a share of that veneration, which the bones of those, whom they represented, had already acquired in the same Churches: and we are told accordingly by St. *Austin*, that he knew many, *who were actually the adorers of them* [a].

These were the principles and the practices of the fourth Century; as they are declared by the most eminent Fathers of that age: whence every one may see, what a resemblance they bear to the present rites of the Popish Church. But some perhaps will be apt to suspect, that I am really defending the corruptions of that Church, by assigning to them an origin so ancient and venerable: and the suspicion indeed may seem plausible, since I have been saying little else, but what the Papists themselves would say on the same occasion. Yet it is no more, than what

[y] Oper. Tom. xi. p. 78.

[z] Forte requiratur quanquam ratione gerendi
Sederit hæc nobis sententia, *pingere Sanctas*
Raro more domos, &c. Vid. Paulini Oper. Natal. ix.

[a] Novi multos esse Se- adoratores. De Morib. Ec-
clesiasticorum & picturarum cles. Cathol. Op. T. i. p. 34.
fact

fact and truth oblige me to say ; and no controversy, I hope, will ever heat me, or prejudice biaſs me ſo far, as to make me deny or diſſemble, what the conviction of my own mind requires me to confeſs. But whatever advantage the Romaniſts may hope to reap from this confeſſion, it really gives them none at all. Our diſpute with them is, not how ancient, but how true their doctrines and practices are : And if they are not derived from Chriſt or his Apoſtles, nor founded in the holy Scriptures, it is wholly indifferent to us Proteſtants, from what age they drew their birth ; whether it was from the *four firſt*, or the *four laſt* centuries of the Church.

But this ſhort ſketch, which I have been giving of thoſe primitive times, was not deſigned ſo much to illuſtrate the origin of their rites, as to lay open the grounds of their miracles ; and to ſhew what reaſons the Romiſh Church hath to eſpouſe, and what the Proteſtant Churches, if they are conſiſtent with themſelves, to ſuſpect and diſclame them. For example, after the converſion of the *Roman* Empire to Chriſtianity, we ſhall find the greateſt part of their boated miracles to have been wrought either by *Monks*, or *Reliques*, or *the Sign of the Croſs*, or *conſecrated Oil* : wherefore if we admit the Miracles, we muſt neceſſarily admit the rites, for the ſake of which they were wrought : they both reſt on the ſame bottom, and mutually eſtabliſh each other. For it is a maxim, which muſt be allowed

lowed by all Christians, that whenever any sacred rite or religious institution becomes the instrument of miracles, we ought to consider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation. “ I know, says one of the ablest writers of the *Romish* Church, “ by the evidence of manifest and “ incorrupt tradition, that there hath always “ been a never-interrupted succession of men “ from the Apostles time, believing, professing, “ and practising such and such doctrines, by “ evident argument of credibility, as miracles, “ sanctity, unity, &c. and by all those ways, “ whereby the Apostles and our blessed Saviour “ himself confirmed their doctrines: And we “ are assured, that what the said never-inter- “ rupted Church proposeth, doth deserve to “ be accepted and acknowledged as a divine “ truth [b].” And thus far we must own, the Jesuit argues rightly; that if we receive those *arguments of credibility*, as he calls them, we must receive the doctrines which accompany them, as so many *divine verities, revealed and attested by Almighty God*. So that if the authority of a *Chrysostom*, or a *Jerom*, or an *Austin* can oblige us to believe the miracles of the fourth century, they must oblige us also, to espouse the rites, which those miracles confirmed, and those Fathers practised.

[b] See Mr. *Kest*, on Charity maintained, Sec. in the Works of *Chillingworth*, 7th Edit. c. vi. p. 228. § 6.

Dr. *Chapman*, however, not aware perhaps of this consequence, or not allowing it to have any force, is not satisfied with asserting the miracles of the fourth century, but, as if more were still wanted to the support of the Christian cause, frankly undertakes the defence also of the fifth; in which all those superstitious practices, above mentioned, had gained a greater root, and more general establishment: And while the warmest admirers of the primitive times, can hardly digest the wonderful tales of the fourth age, on the united testimony of all its renowned Fathers, he thinks himself obliged, to espouse those of the more corrupt age, which follows, upon the single authority of *Theodoret*.

But to this, I shall speak more fully hereafter, in the following work; where I shall consider those particular miracles, which Dr. *Chapman* has selected, as the proper objects of our belief, and defended as such, against the enemies of the Christian faith. In the mean while, I shall offer onely a single passage from the same *Theodoret*, on whose testimony he lays so great a stress, which will help, not onely to confirm what I have already been advancing, but give us a specimen also, of the character of this Father, as well as of the state of Christianity in this fifth age.

“ The Temples of our Martyrs, says he, are
 “ shining and conspicuous: eminent for their
 “ grandor,

“ grandor, and the variety of their ornaments ;
 “ and displaying far and wide the splendor of
 “ their beauty. These we visit, not once or
 “ twice, or five times in the year, but frequent-
 “ ly offer up hymns each day to the Lord of
 them ; in health we beg the continuance of it ;
 “ in sickness, the removal of it ; the childless
 “ beg children, and the barren to become mo-
 “ thers ; and when these blessings are obtained,
 “ we beg the secure enjoyment of them. When
 “ we undertake any journey, we beg them to be
 “ our companions and guides in it : and when
 “ we return safe, we pay them our thanks : and
 “ that those, who pray with faith and sincerity,
 “ obtain what they ask, is manifestly testified by
 “ the number of offerings, which are made to
 “ them, in consequence of the benefits received.
 “ For some offer the figures of eyes ; some of
 “ feet ; some of hands, made either of gold or
 “ of silver, which the Lord accepts, tho’ but of
 “ little value ; measuring the gift, by the facul-
 “ ties of the giver. But all these are the evi-
 “ dent proofs of the cures of as many distempers ;
 “ being placed there, as monuments of the fact,
 “ by those, who have been made whole. The
 “ same monuments likewise proclame the power
 “ of the dead. Whose power also demonstrates
 “ their God, to be the true God [c].”

Now this is nothing else, but the very picture of that same superstition, which is practised at

[c] Serm. viii, de Martyrib.

this

this day by the Papists, and was borrowed of old from the Pagans [d]. *Livy* tells the same thing of the Temples of the Heathen Gods which *Theodoret* does here of the Temples of their Saints; that *they were rich in the number of offerings*, which the people used to make *in return for the cures*, and benefits which they had received from them [e]. In both cases, we allow the offerings to be real, but take the cures, or the miraculous part of them at least, to be imaginary: and as we reject *Livy's* miracles without scruple, or any hurt to the faith of history, so we may reject *Theodoret's* too, without shaking the evidence of any thing else, that is credible.

Thus we see, to what a state of things, the miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries would reduce us: they would call us back again to the old superstition of our ancestors; would fill us with *Monks, and Reliques, and Masses*, and all the other trinkets, which the treasury of *Rome* can supply: for this is the necessary effect of that zeal, which would engage us in the defence of them. But if the miracles of these later ages must needs be rejected; and if, as I have said above, Ecclesiastical History makes no difference between them, and those of the earlier ages, it may reasonably be asked, where then are we to

[d] See my Letter from *Rome* on this subject.

[e] Epidaurus, inclita Æsculapii nobilis templo,—turn

donis dives erat, quæ remedium salutarium ægri mercedem sacraverant Deo. lib. xlv. 28.

Ixii INTRODUCTIONARY DISCOURSE.

stop? And to what period must we confine ourselves? And this indeed is the grand difficulty, which was the chief object of my attention, through this whole inquiry; and what has puzzled all the other doctors, who have been considering the same quæstion before me. But before I give any answer to it, or declare my own opinion, it may be proper, to premise a remark or two, on the insufficiency of the several systems already advanced; and to lay down some general principles, which may lead us to a more rational solution of the matter, than what has hitherto been offered.

Mr. *Dodwell*, as we have seen above, chuses to shut up the history of true miracles with the *three first centuries*; condemning those of the fourth, as generally forged and fabulous: for the proof of which, he appeals to the monstrous fictions, which *St. Athanasius*, *St. Jerom*, and *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, have related. And thus far, I entirely agree with him; that the pretended miracles of this age are utterly incredible; and particularly those, to which he refers us, and to which we might add many more, affirmed also from their own knowledge, by *St. Austin*, *St. Epiphanius*, and all the other Saints of the same times. Yet after so free a censure on the miracles of the fourth age, the same learned writer thinks it necessary still, to make some exceptions, for a few of them, which *St. Chrysofom* has attested. But such a distinction appears to
be

be wholly groundless: or if there be any difference between this particular Father and the rest of them, it is clearly to the disadvantage of *Chrysoſtom*, when conſidered in the character of a witness. For his peculiar talents were thoſe of a declamatory Preacher, whoſe art lay, in warming the paſſions, not in convincing the reaſon; and whoſe pompous ſtyle and rhetorical flouriſhes, inſtead of being adapted to a ſimple narrative of plain facts, was apt rather to exaggerate plain facts into miracles [*f*]. And as there is no ground for any preference, in his perſonal character, ſo there is none likewise in the particular miracles, which he attests; which are all ſaid to be wrought, not by the miniſtry of any living and holy men, but by the *reliques of the dead*; or *the oil of their lamps*; or *the ſign of the Croſs*.

Dr. *Waterland* ſeems to have been of the ſame mind in general with Mr. *Dodwell*, concerning the miracles of the fourth century; yet being loth to part with them, and much more, to fix any ſtur on the credit of its principal Fathers, has uſed a little artifice in the manner of declaring it. For after he has often affirmed, *that the miraculous powers of the Church ſubſiſted through the three firſt centuries at leaſt*, he adds the following amendment to it, *Nay, and if we may believe Papias, who reports it as an eye-witneſs, they*

[*f*] Ac ne forſitan Rhetores vobis duplicent, quorum arte eſt verſimilia magis, quam vera dicere — Hieron. Oper. T. iv. par. ii. p. 236.

continued down to the latter end of the fourth [g]. But why must we be referred to *Paulinus* onely, in a quæstion of such importance? a name unknown to the greatest part of his readers; while the names of *Athanasius*, *Basil*, *Austin*, *Ferom*, *Chrysoftom*, are in every body's mouth, and appealed to by himself on every other occasion; and who have written whole books, on the miracles of that very age, wrought by *Saints*, and *Menks*, and *Reliques*; many of which they have reported likewise, as eye-witnesſes, as well as *Paulinus*. The omission therefore of these greater names, which could not possibly be accidental, is a clear, tho' tacit confession that he knew them all to have forfeited their credit, in this particular cause: and that even his beloved *Athanasius*, on whose faith he had pinned his own, and on the defence of whose orthodoxy, he had spent his whole life and studies, was not to be trusted at last with the report of a miracle.

But what is it, after all, that *Paulinus* could teach us, more credibly than any of the rest? He was a noble convert from Paganism, and Bishop of *Nola* in *Italy*: where he built a Church to *St. Felix* the Martyr, with whose acts he painted it, and with whose reliques he enriched it; and has celebrated, both in prose and verse, the miracles performed by those reliques [*b*]. But the particular miracle, for which we are referred

[g] Import. of the Trin. xvii. p. 77, 78. Oper. Edit. p. 497. Par. 4to.

[b] Vid. Paulin. Poem.

to him by the Doctör as an eye-witnefs, is this ; that “ when St. *Ambrose*, upon the conviction of “ a certain offender, was pronouncing the fen- “ tence of excommunication againft him ; in “ the very instant of delivering him over to “ Satan, and while the words were yet in his “ mouth, the Devil began to feize and tear him, “ as his own, to the great amazement and won- “ der of *Paulinus*, and the reft, who were pre- “ fent [*i*].”

On the whole, then ; after the ftriçteft atten- tion to what both the antients and the moderns alfo have delivered on this fubject, I find great reason to be convinced, that the pretended mi- racles of the fourth century, were not onely in general, and for the greateft part, but intirely and univerfally, the effects of fraud and im- pofture. Nor can I fee the leaft ground to ad- mit any exception, either with Mr. *Dodwell*, for thofe reported by St. *Chryfoftom* ; or with Dr. *Waterland*, for thofe by *Paulinus* : For I take it to be a maxim, on which we may fafely depend, that wherever the Bifhops, the Clergy, and the principal Champions of the Chriftian caufe, are found to be tampering with falfe miracles, and eftablifhing new rites and doctri- nes by lies and forgeries, it would be vain for us, to look for any true miracles in that age, and that Church. And this was actually the cafe of the fourth century : in which all its moft illu- ftrious Fathers,

[*i*] See Dr. *Waterland*, *ibid*.

now Saints of the Catholic Church ; *St. Athanasius*, *St. Epiphanius*, *St. Basil*, *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, *St. Ambrose*, *St. Jerom*, *St. Austin*, and *St. Chrysostom*, have all severally recorded and solemnly attested a number of miracles, said to be wrought in confirmation of some favorite institutions of those days, which, in the judgment of all the learned and candid Protestants, are manifestly fictitious, and utterly incredible.

We have now therefore gained some footing and ground as it were to stand upon. For this discovery of the state of the fourth century, will reflect fresh light on our searches, both backwards and forwards ; and from it's middle situation, give us a clearer view, as well into the earlier, as the later ages. For example ; if we suppose the miraculous powers of the Church to have been withdrawn, in the beginning of this century, the first inference, which it suggests, is, that they were withdrawn likewise through all the succeeding centuries. Because the reasons, for which they are imagined to have ceased at this particular period, grow stronger still in every later age, as the Church was every day gaining strength and a firmer establishment, not onely from the protection of the Magistrate, but from an authority and power of its own, independent on the civil Government.

But above all, when, in all these later ages, instead of meeting with genuin miracles, we find

fables and fictions, assuming that sacred character, and abounding still more and more, and, by the pretence of a divine authority, giving a sanction to *Heathenish Rites and superstitious Doctrines*, it would be childish, to expect the revival of real miracles, unless it were to detect and destroy the effects of those false ones, which were so evidently corrupting the faith and worship of the Christian Church. Since the miracles then of the fifth century, which our Doctors so strenuously defend, instead of defeating the frauds of the fourth, tend still to confirm them; being performed chiefly by the same instruments, and for the same ends; we must necessarily rank them all under the same class of mere forgeries. But these advocates of the primitive miracles have not yet given us the least hint, or reason to imagine, that they intend to stop here, or to confine themselves even to the fifth century: since the same principles which carried them so far, would carry them still farther, if the credit of Ecclesiastical History, or its miracles, should happen to be attacked by an Infidel or Heretic.

For example; *Pope Gregory* the first, commonly called *the Great*, wrote *four books of Dialogues*, in which he describes *the lives and miracles of the Italian Monks*: many of them from his own knowledge, and the rest, as he declares, from the testimony of grave and venerable persons, on whose fidelity he could depend. These books were written in the end of the sixth century,

tury, and are filled with a number of stories, so grossly absurd, and fabulous, that it would be difficult, one would think, to find any old woman in these days, so weakly credulous, as to believe them. They inform us of many persons “ actually raised from the dead; many blind “ restored to sight; and, all sorts of diseases “ cured, by the prayers or touch of those “ Monks [k]: Of their walking upon water, as “ freely as upon dry land; of rivers drawn by “ them from their natural course, and following them into a new chanel, which they “ traced out to them. Of inundations of water “ rising up almost to the roofs of Churches, “ without entering the doors of them, which “ stood open: Of the arm of an Executioner, “ fixed upright in the air, as it was lifted up, to “ strike off the head of one of those holy men, “ and restored by him on condition, that it “ should never again behead any Christian: Of “ vessels of oil and wine miraculously replenished; and of pieces of gold, as fresh as from the “ mint, dropt from heaven into their laps:” with numberless other miracles, more trifling still and despicable, contrived chiefly to advance *the honour of Monkeny; the worship of Saints and of the blessed Virgin; the belief of a Purgatory; and the divine effects of Holy Water, &c.* [l].

[k] Vid. Gregor. Magn. Dial. l. i. c. 2, 10, 12. l. ii. 32. l. iii. 17, 33, &c. [l] Ibid. l. ii. c. 7. l. iii. 9, 19, 37. l. i. 5, 9, 10. l. iv. 15, 16, 39, 40.

The apparent forgery of these miracles, and the confident attestation of them by *Gregory*, has induced many Protestants, and even some Papists also, to call in question the genuineness of these books : but the learned *Cave*, after duly weighing all the arguments, on the one side and the other, takes them to have been really written by *Gregory the Great* ; *who indulged his credulity in them, he says, and gave more attention to fables, than he ought to have done, as all, who judge equitably and without prejudice, will easily allow* [m]. But these dialogues contain several miracles, said to have been wrought in confutation of the *Arian Heresy* ; of which *Dr. Berriman* makes some use, in his elaborate defence of the *Athanasian Doctrine* ; where, speaking of the objections, which have been made against the authority of the Dialogues, he takes occasion to observe, *that as far as those objections arise from the miraculousness of the things related, he sees not, why we should dispute the facts, unless it could be proved, as it certainly cannot, that miracles were then ceased* [n].

Thus the miraculous powers of the Church are expressly avowed by him, to the end even of the sixth century ; in which Popery had gained a full establishment : yet this Protestant Divine cannot conceive the least reason to dispute *the*

[m] Hist. Litter. Vol. I. p. 513. of the Trinitarian Controversy, Serm. vii. p. 356.

[n] See historical account not. q.

miraculousness of those facts which established it; nay, defies any man to prove, *that miracles were yet ceased in this Popish age.*

In his accurate defence of that miracle of the fifth century, referred to above, amongst his other testimonies, he mentions the authority of this same *Gregory the Great*, and of his contemporary, *Ifidore of Sevil*, who had too much learning and judgement, he says, *to be deceived in so important a fact* [o]. And since he thinks them infallible, in reporting a fact, which happened, as he owns, near *an hundred years* before, he has much more reason to think them so, in relating the facts of their own times: of which times, however, Dr. *Cave* gives us the following character, under that of *Evagrius*, the principal Historian of them, of whom he says, “ that he
 “ was agreeable enough in his style, and more
 “ accurate in the orthodoxy of his doctrines,
 “ than the other Historians, but too credulous,
 “ and much addicted to fables, as it is manifest
 “ to all, who are not blinded by their prejudices,
 “ from the stories, which he relates on every
 “ occasion, concerning *the Cross, and reliques,*
 “ *and forged miracles,* to be in high esteem in
 “ those days [p].” Yet neither the fabulous genius of this age, nor the incredibility of the miracles, said to have been wrought in it; nor the impertinence, the absurdity, nor the impie-

[o] See Perrin. *ibid* p. 330. [p] *Hist. Litterar. Vol. I. P. 547.*

ty, I may say, of the ends for which they were wrought, can shock the faith of *Dr. Berriman*; or raise any suspicion of *the miraculousness of facts*, affirmed by the *infallibility of Pope Gregory*.

Since the zeal then of these Protestant Guides has now brought us within the very pale of the *Romish Church*, I see nothing, which can stop their progress, from the sixth age down to the present: from *Pope Gregory the Great*, to *Pope Clement the twelfth*; the last of whom I personally knew, and believe to have been as honest and religious a Pontif, as the first. For each succeeding age will furnish miracles, and witnesses too, of as good credit as those of the sixth. The next supplies a *Venerable Bede*; whose very name carries authority; and whose learning, zeal, and purity of faith and manners, were celebrated through the Christian world; yet whose works are filled with miracles, which no man of sense can believe [q]. The eighth age yields a *Damascene*: whose great knowledge and erudition in all the learned sciences, nobody, says *Cave*, in his senses can deny: yet he was monstrously credulous, and, as the *Popish writers themselves allow*, abounds with lies [r]. And thus we may proceed, thro' every following age, to find men of the same character; eminent for their learning, zeal, and

[q] Vid. *Bed. de Vita & miraculis Sancti Cuthbert. Op. Historic. Ed. Cantab. p. 229.* [r] *Cave ibid. p. 624.*

piety; yet all of them still carrying on the same frauds, down to *the Perrons, the Baronius's, the Bellarmines, and the Huetius's*, of these later times; whose names are full as venerable, and testimonies as credible, as any of the more ancient.

From these premises, it is evident, that the forged miracles of the fourth century, must necessarily taint the credit of all the later miracles, down even to the present age. For they depend as it were upon each other, as the parts of one uniform series, or chain, so that where-ever we draw out a link, all the rest which hang upon it, must of course fall to the ground. Let us consider then, in the next place, what light the same forgeries will afford us, in looking backward also into the earlier ages, up to the times of the Apostles.

And first, when we reflect on that surprizing confidence and security, with which the principal Fathers of this fourth age have affirmed as true, what they themselves had either forged or what they knew at least to be forged; it is natural to suspect, that so bold a defiance of sacred truth could not be acquired, or become general at once, but must have been carried gradually to that height, by custom, and the example of former times, and a long experience of what the credulity and superstition of the multitude would bear.

Secondly,

Secondly, this suspicion will be strengthened, by considering, that this age, in which Christianity was established by the civil power, had no real occasion for any miracles. For which reason, the learned among the Protestants have generally supposed it, to have been the very æra of their cessation: and for the same reason, the Fathers also themselves, when they were disposed to speak the truth, have not scrupled to confess, *that the miraculous gifts were then actually withdrawn, because the Church stood no longer in need of them* [s]. So that it must have been a rash, and dangerous experiment, to begin to forge miracles, at a time when there was no particular temptation to it; if the use of such fictions had not long been tried, and the benefit of them approved and recommended by their ancestors: who wanted every help, towards supporting themselves under the pressures and persecutions, with which the powers on earth were afflicting them.

Thirdly, if we compare the principal Fathers of the fourth, with those of the earlier ages; we shall observe the same characters of zeal and piety in them all, but more learning, more judgement, and less credulity, in the later Fathers. If these then be found, either to have forged miracles themselves; or to have propa-

[s] This will be particularly shown in the course of my following argument.

gated what they knew to be forged ; or to have been deluded so far by other people's forgeries, as to take them for real miracles ; (of the one or the other of which, they were all unquestionably guilty) it will naturally excite in us, the same suspicion of their predecessors ; who, in the same cause, and with the same zeal, were less learned, and more credulous, and in greater need of such arts for their defence and security.

Fourthly, as the personal characters of the earlier Fathers give them no advantage over their Successors, so neither does the character of the earlier ages afford any real cause of preference, as to the point of their integrity, above the latter. The first indeed are generally called, and held to be *the purest* : but when they had once acquired that title, from the authority of a few leading men, it is not strange, to find it ascribed to them implicitly by every body else, without knowing or inquiring into the grounds of it. But whatever advantage of purity those first ages may claim in some particular respects, it is certain, that they were defective in some others, above all, which have since succeeded them. For there never was any period of time in all Ecclesiastical History, in which so many *rank Heresies* were publicly professed [†], nor in which so many *spurious books* were forged and

[†] The learned, I think, sprang up within the three first centuries. have reckoned about ninety different Heresies, which all

published by the Christians, under the names of Christ, and the Apostles, and the Apostolic writers, as in those primitive ages: several of which forged books are frequently cited and applied to the defence of Christianity, by the most eminent Fathers of the same ages, as true and genuin pieces, and of equal authority, with the Scriptures themselves [u]. And no man surely can doubt, but that those, who would either forge, or make use of forged books, would in the same cause, and for the same ends, make use of forged miracles.

But the true character of these ages may best be learnt from one, who lived in the very midst of them, and was himself the chief ornament of them, I mean St. *Cyprian*, who has left us the following account of the state of the Church, just before the *Decian* persecution, about *A. D.*

[u] See Archbishop *Wake's* Preliminary Discourse to the Genuin Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers, p. 89. where he has given us a list of a great part of those spurious pieces, with a short account of each—in which he tells us, that it would be endless to insist on all the spurious pieces, which were attributed only to St. Paul; but that the superstitious books, ascribed to St. Peter, viz. his Acts, his Gospel, his Preaching, his Reve-

lations, were of much greater authority even to the times of *Eusebius*. [§ 18, 19.] He observes, also, that the book called *the Recognitions of St. Clement*, which he takes to be the most learned, as well as the most ancient of any of those pieces, was not set forth till about the middle of the second Century, and is rejected by *Eusebius*, as one of those many impostures, which were even then published under the name of that Saint. § 28.

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250, when its discipline, as he says, was corrupted, and its faith almost lost, by the long ease and peace, which it had then enjoyed, for near forty years; during which interval, he tells us, “ that the body of Christians studied no-
 “ thing, but how to increase their patrimony :
 “ and forgetting what the faithful had done, ei-
 “ ther in the times of the Apostles, or what they
 “ ought to do at all times, had no other passion,
 “ but an insatiable ardor of enlarging their for-
 “ tunes. That there was no true devotion in
 “ the priests, no sound faith in the ministers :
 “ no mercy in their works, no discipline in their
 “ manners : that the men destroyed the come-
 “ lines of their beards, and women of their
 “ faces, by paint and false arts : their eyes also,
 “ so finished by the hand of God, were adul-
 “ terated; and their hair stained with colors,
 “ not their own. That the simple were delud-
 “ ed, and the brethren circumvented by craft
 “ and fraud. That it was common, to contract
 “ marriages with unbelievers : and to prostitute
 “ the members of Christ to the Gentiles : and
 “ to swear not onely rashly, but falsely : to con-
 “ temn their rulers with an insolent pride ; to
 “ speak against them with spite and rancour ;
 “ and to quarrel among themselves with an ob-
 “ stinate hatred. That great numbers of the
 “ Bishops, who ought to be an example and
 “ lesson to the rest, contemning their divine
 “ Stewardship, made themselves the stewards of
 “ secular affairs ; rambling about into other
 “ people’s

“ people’s provinces ; and seeking out the mar-
 “ kets of traffic and gain ; and instead of re-
 “ lieving their hungry brethren in the Church,
 “ were eager onely to heap up money ; to feize
 “ people’s lands by treachery and fraud ; and to
 “ increafe their stock by exorbitant ufury [x].”

This is the picture of thofe ages, which people affect to call the *pureft*, as it was drawn from the life, by the ableft mafter of the times, which he describes : and though the character of the drawer muft oblige us to believe, that it bore a great likenefs to the original, yet it is fo far from giving us any idea of purity or perfection, that if it had been drawn, even for our own times, we might juftly think the coloring too coarfe, and the features charged beyond the truth.

Now from all thefe confiderations taken together, it muft, I think, be allowed, that the forged miracles of the fourth century give us juft reason to fufpect the pretentions of every other age both before and after it. My argument would be much the fame, if it were grounded on the allowed forgeries of any later age. Dr. *Chapman*, who defends the miracles of the fifth century, declares *that there were fome of thefe later inftances, as public, as clear, and as well attested, as any in the earlier ages ; and by an evidence, equal to that, by which moft of the ancient*

[x] De Lapsis, p. 170. Ed. Rigalt.

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miracles are supported [y]. Dr. Berriman, in his defence of a particular miracle, near the end of the same century, insists, *that it cannot be discredited, without shaking the whole faith of History, and rejecting all accounts of miracles, except those of the Scriptures* [z]. And so far I agree with them both, and own their defence to be true; that the earlier miracles rest on no better foundation, nor are supported by any better evidence, than the later. But then, if these later, after all the confidence of their Advocates, may certainly be discredited, and must consequently be rejected; it follows from their own principles, that the earlier may, with as much reason, be rejected too. Which brings me at last to that general conclusion, which I have undertaken to illustrate; *that there is no sufficient reason to believe, from the testimony of antiquity, that any miraculous powers did ever actually subsist in any age of the Church, after the times of the Apostles.*

But this will be the proper business of the subsequent Treatise, in which, I shall endeavour to evince, by particular facts and testimonies, what this general view of the question, here given, and the reflections naturally arising from it, would previously dispose us to suspect; that the pretended miracles of the primitive Church were all mere fictions; which the pious and zealous Fathers, partly from a weak credulity, and partly from reasons of policy; believing

[y] Miscell. Tracts, p. 170, 175.

[z] Serm. p. 327.

some perhaps to be true, and knowing all of them to be useful, were induced to espouse and propagate, for the support of a righteous cause.

I have already observed, that many spurious books were forged in the earliest times of the Church, in the Names of Christ and his Apostles, which passed upon all the Fathers, as genuine and divine through several successive ages. Now as the high authority of the Apostolic writings, and the zeal, with which they were sought for by all Churches, was the motive, without doubt, which excited some of the ablest, and most learned of the Christians, to take the pains of forging and vending such books under those false titles; so the great fame and success of the Apostolic miracles, would naturally excite some also of the most crafty, when the Apostles themselves were dead, to attempt some juggling tricks in imitation of them, and by the pretence of a divine power, to impose upon that *simplicity and credulity*, which distinguished the character of those early ages. And [a] when these artful

[a] The Primitive Christians were perpetually reproached for their gross credulity by all their enemies. *Celsus* says, that they *cared neither to receive, nor to give any reason of their faith*, and that it was an usual saying with them, *do not examine, but believe only, and thy faith will save thee.* *Julian* affirms,

that the sum of all their wisdom was comprized in this single precept, Believe. The Gentiles, says *Arnobius*, make it their constant business *to laugh at our faith, and to lash our credulity with their facetious jokes.* *Orig.* con. *Cels.* l. i. p. 8, 9. *Greg. Nazian.* Inveſt. i. *Arnob.* l. ii. p. 22, 23.

The Fathers, on the other pretenders,

pretenders, by insinuating themselves chiefly in private houses, or among the ignorant populace, had been able to maintain their ground through the three first centuries, the leading Clergy of the fourth, who were then established by the civil power, and at liberty to apply all arts without reserve to the conversion of the Heathens, understood their interest too well, to part with the old plea of miraculous gifts, which had been found so effectual, to dazzle the senses and possess the minds of the multitude.

This seems to have been the general state of the case in quæstion: and though it may shock the prejudices of many, and clash with the systems which are commonly entertained; yet it will be found, I dare say, to be true, or at least the most probable; and, as such, the most useful also, to the real Defence of the Christian cause. For, as far as miracles can evince the divinity of a religion, the pretensions of Christianity are confirmed by the evidence of such, as of all others on record, are the least liable to exception, and carry the clearest marks of their

hand, defend themselves by saying, that they did nothing more on this occasion, than what the Philosophers had always done; that *Pythagoras's* precepts were inculcated by an *Ipsè dixit*, and that they had found the same method useful with the vulgar, who

were not at leisure to examine things; whom they taught therefore *to believe, even without reasons*: and that the Heathens themselves, tho' they did not confess it in words, yet practised the same in their acts. *Ibid.*

sincerity;

sincerity ; being wrought by Christ and his Apostles, for an end so great, so important, and so universally beneficial, as to be highly worthy of the interposition of the Deity ; and wrought by the ministry of mean and simple men, in the open view of the people, as the testimonial of that divine mission to which they pretended ; and delivered to us by eye-witnesses, whose honest characters exclude the suspicion of fraud, and whose knowledge of the facts, which they relate, scarce admits the probability of a mistake. This is the genuin ground on which Christianity rests ; the history of our Saviour's doctrine and miracles, as it is declared and comprized within the canon of the Holy Scriptures. Whenever we go beyond this, we weaken its foundation, by endeavouring to enlarge it ; and by recurring to an evidence less strong and of doubtful credit, take pains onely to render a good cause suspected, and expose it to the perpetual ridicule of the Sceptics and Freethinkers.

Should our Infidels then be disposed, to make themselves merry with the miracles of a *Symeon Stylites*, or any other crack'd-brain monk of the 4th or 5th century, there is no reason for Dr. *Chapman* to be so angry with them [b] : let us

[b] This *Symeon* (who acquired the name of *Stylites*, by a most extravagant whim which he took, of spending the best part of his life on the

top of a pillar, six and thirty cubits high) was a mad enthusiastic Monk of the 5th Century, to whom many monstrous and superstitious

suffer them to laugh on, and even laugh with them ourselves ; and by throwing out an empty tub to their sport, secure the vessel itself from their attacks. Or should the Romanists, on the other hand, pretend to urge us with their miracles, and to shew the succession of them from the earliest ages, we have no reason to be moved at it, but may tell them without scruple, that we admit no miracles but those of the Scriptures ; and that all the rest are either justly suspected or certainly forged. By putting the controversy on this issue, we shall either disarm them at once, or, if they persist in the dispute, may be sure to convict them of fraud and imposture : whereas by granting them but a single age of miracles, after the times of the Apostles, we shall be entangled in a series of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourselves, till we allow the same powers also to the present age.

And in truth, it has always been considered, as a fundamental principle of the Reformation, *that the Scriptures are a compleat rule both of faith and manners ; and as such are clear also and intelligible, in all fundamental points, to every private Christian.* In this, all Protestant Churches agree, how much soever they may differ in any other

acts are ascribed, by the Ecclesiastical writers, as the effects of a divine inspiration: all which Dr. *Chapman* most strenuously and zealously de-

fends, against the raillery of the Author of Christianity as old as the Creation. See his *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 165. § III.

article: and if this be true, then whatever be the characters of the ancient Fathers, or whatever they may have taught, and practised in any age of the Church, is a matter wholly indifferent, and makes no part in the religion of a Protestant: and consequently, no difference of judgement with regard to those Fathers, ought to give any cause of offence or hatred among the members of that communion. For if the Scriptures are sufficient, we do not want them as guides; or if clear, as interpreters. Every one therefore may enjoy his opinion of them, with the same liberty, as of any other writers whatsoever, with this caution onely, that an esteem of them is apt to carry us too far, and has actually carried many into great and dangerous errors: whereas the neglect of them cannot be attended with any ill consequence, since the Scriptures teach every thing that is necessary, either to be believed or practised.

I cannot illustrate this principle so effectually, as by the following words of the excellent *Cbilingworth*, who, of all men, best understood the real grounds of the controversy, between the Protestants and the Papists.

“ The Bible, I say, the Bible onely, is the religion of Protestants. Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, and indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it, as a matter of opinions, but as

“ matter of faith and religion, neither can they,
 “ with coherence to their own grounds, believe
 “ it themselves, nor require the belief of it of
 “ others, without most high and most schismatical
 “ presumption. I, for my part, after a long,
 “ and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial
 “ search of the *true way to eternal happiness*, do
 “ profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for
 “ the sole of my foot, but on this rock onely.
 “ I see plainly, and with my own eyes, that
 “ there are Popes against Popes; Councils
 “ against Councils; some Fathers against others;
 “ the same Fathers against themselves; a con-
 “ sent of Fathers of one age, against the consent
 of Fathers of another age; the Church of one
 “ age against the Church of another age: Tra-
 “ ditive interpretations of Scripture are pretend-
 “ ed, but there are none to be found. No tra-
 “ dition, but onely of Scripture, can derive it-
 “ self from the fountain, but may be plainly
 “ proved, either to have been brought in, in
 “ such an age after Christ, or that in such an
 “ age, it was not in. In a word, there is no suf-
 “ ficient certainty, but of Scripture onely, for
 “ any considerate man to build upon,” &c.

But though this doctrine of the sufficiency of
 the Scriptures be generally professed through all
 the reformed Churches, yet it has happened, I
 know not how, in our own, that its Divines
 have been apt, on all occasions, to join the au-
 thority of the primitive Church to that of sacred
 writ; to supply doctrines from the ancient

Councils, in which the Scriptures are either silent or thought defective; to add the Holy Fathers to the College of the Apostles; and by ascribing the same gifts and powers to them both, to advance the primitive traditions, to a parity with Apostolic precepts.

Thus the late Dr. *Waterland*, who was supposed to speak the sense of our present Rulers, seldom appeals to the Scriptures in his controversial writings, without joining antiquity to them, or the authority of *the three first centuries at least*, that *golden age of Christianity*, as he calls it [c]. He declares, “ that the true interpretation of
 “ Scripture cannot run counter, in things fun-
 “ damental, to the judgement of the first and
 “ purest ages: that to depreciate the value of
 “ Ecclesiastical Antiquity, and to throw con-
 “ tempt on the primitive Fathers, is to wound
 “ Christianity through their sides [d]: and that
 “ Christ never sits so secure and easy on his
 “ throne, as with these faithful guards about
 “ him [e]:” and he concludes his elaborate treatise on *the use and value of Antiquity*, in these words:

“ The sum of what I have been endeavouring
 “ through this whole chapter, is, that Scripture
 “ and Antiquity (under the conduct of right
 “ reason) are what we ought to abide by, in

[c] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 426. [d] Ibid. p. 395. [e] Ibid. 396.

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“ settling points of doctrine, I have not put the
 “ case of Scripture and Antiquity interfering,
 “ or clashing with each other ; because it is a
 “ case, which will never appear in points of
 “ importance, such as this is, which we are now
 “ upon. However, as to the general case, we
 “ may say, that those two ought always to go
 “ together, and to concide with each other :
 “ and when they do so, they stand the firmer in
 “ their united strength : but if ever they clash,
 “ or appear to clash, then undoubtedly there is
 “ an error somewhere, like as when two ac-
 “ countants vary in casting up the same sum,
 “ &c. [*f*].”

Here we see Antiquity joined as a necessary and inseparable companion to the Scripture, and put even upon a level with it, by this eminent Advocate of the Christian Faith. But since this seems to be a flat contradiction to the principles of the Reformation, and dangerous to the general credit and interests of the Protestant religion, it may be worth while to consider a little, from what particular motives and circumstances, so inconsistent a practice should happen to prevail more remarkably in this, than in any other Protestant Church.

Our first and principal Reformers, in the reign of *Henry the VIIIth*, had not the power to

[*f*] Ibid. p. 465.

carry the Reformation so far, as they desired ; nor to make such changes in the old worship, as put them under a necessity of discarding the authority of the primitive Fathers ; but, on the contrary, were obliged against their wills, to comply still with many rites and doctrines, which had no other foundation, but in that authority ; which therefore, in those circumstances, they were forced to assert and defend. For how much soever they might be disposed, to abolish such rites, and the authority too, on which they stood, they were restrained by the will of an arbitrary Prince, who would not suffer them, to take the least step but by his immediate direction, and from his high conceit of his Theological learning, gave the law even to his Bishops, in all the religious disputes of those days ; and whose chief view after all was, to banish rather the power, than the religion of the Pope, out of his realm.

In the next reign of *Edward the Sixth*, tho' the same reforming Bishops found themselves at liberty, to carry on their great work to its full perfection, yet for the sake, either of their former conduct, and prejudices ; or to preserve a character of constancy ; and to give the less scandal to the Clergy, who still generally favoured the old forms ; they endeavoured, as far as they were able, tho' sometimes by forced and unnatural constructions, to justify all their proceedings

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by the example and usages of the ancient Fathers.

On the accession therefore of Queen *Mary*, and the sad catastrophe, which ensued, when the same Reformers, now doomed to be Martyrs, and especially *Cranmer* and *Ridley* (two Fathers of the Protestant Church, as truly venerable, as Christianity perhaps has to boast of, since the times of the Apostles;) when these, I say, were brought out of their prisons, on pretence of holding public disputations, but in truth, to be exposed onely to the scoffs and contumelies of their cruel enemies; and when they had solidly evinced the truth of their doctrines, and baffled all the sophistry of their opponents, by the clear and unanswerable testimonies of the Scriptures, it grieves us after all, to see them labouring and gravelled, at a passage of *Chrysofom*, or *Ambrose*, or *Hilary*, &c; and giving their adversaries an occasion of triumph, by submitting to an authority, which was nothing to the purpose, and which in those unhappy circumstances, they were neither at liberty to reject, nor yet able to reconcile to their cause,

Queen *Elizabeth*, who next succeeded, and finally established the Reformation, affected to retain more pomp and splendor in the external part of religion, than many of her chief Divines approved; who, in compliance however with her humour, submitted to several things, which
they

they hoped in time to get rid of [g]. Her view was, to moderate the prejudices of the Popish Clergy; and to reconcile them by degrees to the new settlement; by leaving in it an outward shew, and some resemblance of the old. From the same principle, a reverence was still kept up to Antiquity; and appeals made on both sides, to the primitive Fathers and ancient Councils, by the Professors of the new, as well as of the old doctrines: which practice has been followed ever since, by the greatest part of our leading Churchmen. But from the little success which it has had, or ever can have, in our controversies with the Papists, it is evident, that it cannot be considered in any other light, but as a vain ostentation of learning, and an impatient zeal, to repel that charge of ignorance and contempt of primitive Antiquity, with which the

[g] In the Preamble of the Will of *Edw. Sandys*, Archbishop of *York*, who died *A. D.* 1588. there is the following passage relating to the rites and ceremonies of the Church, as they were then settled by public Authority.

“ I am persuaded, that such, as are now set down by public Authority— are no way either ungodly or unlawful, but may with good conscience, for order

“ and obedience sake be used.—So I have ever been persuaded, that some of them be not so expedient for this Church, but that they may better be dissolved by little and little, than more and more urged. As I do easily acknowledge, that our Ecclesiastical polity may in some points be bettered— So I do utterly dislike all such rude platforms, &c.”

Protestant

Protestant Churches are constantly reproached by the Romanists.

In the two following reigns, the Popish interest began to raise its head again in *England*. *James the First* was a mere School-Divine, fond of theological disputes; and though he wrote against the Papists, yet *being afraid of them*, as *Bishop Burnet* says, *always acted for them* [b]. And *Charles the First's* Queen, who was a zealot to that religion, used all her power with the King, which was very great, to support and propagate its credit in the Kingdom, and to suspend the rigor of the laws against it. “By the King’s
“connivence, says the learned Dr. *Heylin*, and
“the Queen’s indulgence, the Popish faction
“gathered not onely strength, but confidence;
“multiplying in some numbers about the
“Court, and resorting in a more open manner
“to the Masses at *Somerſet* House; where the
“*Capuchins* had obtained a Chapel and Con-
“vent [i].” The leading Churchmen also, from a compliance with the principles of the Court, and an abhorrence of those of the Puritans, seemed to have formed that senseless project of a reconciliation with *Rome*, and made considerable advances towards it, by giving such an interpretation to the doctrines and form to the discipline of our Church, as might invite all

[b] See *Bishop Burnet's*
History of his Times, Vol. i.
p. 11, 12.

[i] See Life of Archbishop
Laud by Dr. *Pet. Heylin*,
Par. ii. l. iv. p. 337.

moderate Papists, to join with them in its communion. But this compliance had no other effect, nor ever can have, than to weaken the Protestant cause, and to furnish its enemies with the greater power and means to oppress it. Nor did they fail to make their full advantage of it; by representing it, “as a proof of the fickle and
 “unsettled state of the *English* Church, that it
 “was grown sick, as it were, and weary of itself,
 “and could find no rest in the novelties, which
 “it had embraced, but was returning apace to
 “its old principles, and resuming many of the
 “rites and doctrines, for which it had forsaken
 “the Church of *Rome*.” All this was urged with great force against our *Chillingworth*, by that subtil Jesuit, Mr. *Knot*; and exemplified by him in many particulars, which the learned Dr. *Heylin*, who was perfectly acquainted with the ecclesiastical principles of that age, and a strenuous espouser of them, declares to be true, in the following words, drawn from his *Life of Archbishop Laud*.

“If you will take the character of the Church
 “of *England*, says he, from the pen of a Jesuit,
 “you shall find him speaking, among other
 “falshoods, these undoubted truths; *viz.* that
 “the Professors of it, they especially of greatest
 “worth, learning, and authority, love temper
 “and moderation; that the doctrines are alter-
 “ed in many Things; as for example, The
 “Pope not Antichrist; Pictures, free-will, pre-
 “destination,

“ destination, univerſal grace, inherent righte-
 “ ouſneſs; the preferring of charity before
 “ knowledge; the merit, or reward rather of
 “ good works; the thirty nine articles ſeeming
 “ patient, if not ambitious alſo of ſome catholic
 “ ſenſe; that their Churches begin to look with
 “ a new face; their walls to ſpeak a new lan-
 “ guage; and ſome of their Divines to teach,
 “ that the Church hath authority in determin-
 “ ing controverſies of faith, and interpreting the
 “ Scriptures; that men, in talk and writing,
 “ uſe willingly the once fearful names of Priests
 “ and Altars, and are now put in mind, that for
 “ the expoſition of Scripture, they *are by Canon*
 “ *bound to follow the Fathers.*—So far the Jeſuit,
 “ ſays he, may be thought to ſpeak nothing but
 “ truth [k].”

It is needleſs to deſcend to the later reigns; or to obſerve, how far the diſcipline and principles of *Archbiſhop Laud* were adopted again at the Reſtoration; or what credit they ſtill obtain with ſome of the principal Clergy of our own times; ſince this can hardly eſcape the notice of all, who pay any attention to Eccleſiaſtical affairs. But there is another circumſtance, that I muſt not omit to mention, as it is peculiar to our Church, and from *Queen Elizabeth's* time down to our own, has had no ſmall influence on its principles and practice, and which will al-

[k] See *Ibid.* p. 238. and *worth* by *Monſieur DesMaignes* the *Life* alſo of *M. Chillingworth*, p. 113. Not. (AA.)

ways keep up amongst us a full respect to Ecclesiastical antiquity. I mean those unhappy diffensions among the Protestants of this nation, which have split them into different sects and separate communions. For in these disputes, which wholly turn on points of discipline, and external forms of worship, as the authority of the Fathers, whatever weight it ought to have is mostly on the side of the established Church, so the Church will always be disposed to support that authority, which helps it to depress a set of men, who, though agreeing with it in essentials, and dissenting only about things indifferent, are yet more odious, than the Papists themselves, to all the zealous advocates, and warm admirers of the primitive Fathers.

These seem to have been the chief reasons, which from the time even of our reformation, have advanced the credit of Ecclesiastical antiquity to an higher pitch in this kingdom, than in any other Protestant country. Which same principles, by the encouragement which they have generally received from our Governors, are now carried, as we have seen, to an heighth, that must needs alarm all serious Protestants, as they have no other tendency, nor can have any other effect, but to throw us again into the arms of the *Romish* Church. For I have long been of opinion, that the success, which their Missionaries have ever found in this island, and which of late has been more particularly complained of,

is chiefly owing, to those high notions of the primitive discipline, and that great reverence for the ancient Fathers, which are entertained and propagated by a great part of our Clergy. For by agreeing with the Romanists thus far, and joining with them in a common appeal to primitive antiquity, we allow all, which they can fairly draw from it, to be sound and orthodox; and though in the end, they may not perhaps gain every thing, which they aim at, yet they will be sure always, to come off with great advantage.

Mr. *Chillingworth* himself is a memorable example of this truth: who, in his account of the several motives, which induced him to embrace the *Romish* faith, mentions the two following;

“ Because, if any credit may be given to as-
 “ creditable records, as any are extant, the doc-
 “ trine of Catholics hath been frequently con-
 “ firmed, and the opposite doctrine of Pro-
 “ testants confounded, with supernatural and di-
 “ vine miracles.

“ Because the doctrine of the church of *Rome*
 “ is conformable, and the doctrine of Protestants
 “ contrary, to the doctrine of the Fathers, even
 “ by the confession of Protestants themselves:
 “ I mean those Fathers, who lived within the
 “ compass of the first six hundred years; to
 “ whom

“ whom Protestants do very frequently and very
 “ confidently appeal [l].”

These seem to have been the principal arguments, which abused this great man, as he expresses it, and hurried him into the Church of Rome. *Silly Sophisms*, as he afterwards calls them, grounded on mistakes and false suppositions, which he unadvisedly took for granted [m]. Till upon a clear view of the errors, into which they had drawn him, he perceived, that the means could not be pure, when the end was so corrupt, and found no other way of retrieving his mistake, and becoming Protestant again, but by discarding those fallacious records, and fictitious miracles, which had seduced him, and committing himself to the sole guidance, and infallible authority of the holy Scriptures. On this foundation, he has built the most solid and rational defence of the Protestant cause, which has ever been offered to the public since the Reformation. Yet our Champions of these days are employing all their skill, to demolish what he had built, and to adopt again into the system of our faith, all that he had thrown out of it; all the nonsense, the superstition, and the pious frauds of the primitive ages; nor will they allow us even to be Christians, but on those very principles, which must finally make us Papists.

[l] See Pref. to Charity Edition.
 maintained, § 43. in *Chil-* [m] See Ibid. § 42.
lingworth's Works, seventh

The design of the present treatise, is to give some check to the current of this zeal, and to fix the religion of Protestants on its proper basis, that is, on the sacred Scriptures; not on the authority of weak and fallible men, the detection of whose errors, and the suspicion of whose frauds, would necessarily give a wound to Christianity itself; which yet in reality, is no more concerned or affected by the characters of the antient, than of the modern Fathers of the Church. But to declare my opinion in short on the real value of those primitive writers, I freely own them to be of some use and service on several accounts.

First, In attesting and transmitting to us the genuin books of the holy Scriptures. Yet this is not owing to any particular sanctity or sagacity of those antient times, but to the notoriety of the thing, and the authority with which the books themselves were received from their first publication, in all Churches: whence they have since been handed down to us, in the same manner, as the works of all other antient writers, by the perpetual tradition of successive ages, whether pure or corrupt, learned or unlearned.

2dly, Their more immediate and proper use, is, to teach us the doctrines, the rites, the manners, and the learning of the several ages, in which they lived: yet as witnesses onely, not as guides: as declaring, what was then believed,

not what was true ; what was practised, not what ought to be practised : since their works abound with instances of foolish, false, and dangerous opinions, universally maintained and zealously propagated by them all.

Lastly, Their very errors also afford an use and profitable lesson to us : for the many corruptions, which crept into the Church in those very early ages, are a standing proof and admonition to all the later ages, that there is no way of preserving a purity of faith and worship in any Church, but by reviewing them from time to time, and reducing them to the original test and standard of the holy Scriptures.

P O S T S C R I P T.

AFTER I had finished this Introductory treatise, and was preparing to send it to the press, I happened to meet with an Archidiaconal Charge, delivered to the Clergy at a visitation, by the same learned Dr. *Chapman*, whom I have had frequent occasion to mention, in the course of my argument. And since this Charge is a of a singular kind, and bears some relation to the subject of the present inquiry, with regard both to *Popery* and *Primitive Antiquity*, the reader, I hope, will excuse me, if I detain him here a while, with a few short remarks upon it.

The Archdeacon enters directly into the matter of his speech; and instead of congratulating with his reverend brethren, on their deliverance from the *late rebellion*, drops but a slight hint on that, as the prelude onely to *another plot*, of a more dreadful and fatal kind which he is in haste to communicate; the last effort of *subtil Jesuits*, who seeing every other method baffled and ineffectual, resolved to try a new, though bold expedient for their Church; more big, he says, with pest and confusion, than all the former devices of their party against us; striking decisively at the very root of the Reformation, and at the basis of all protestant

testant

testant Churches; and secretly working, at this very time, incredible mischief against our whole religion[a]. Then as to *the Leader in this Plot*, he describes him like another *Catiline*; furnished with every great talent, proper for the purpose; an head acute and prolific; learning extensive and various; language dogmatical and lively; a zeal never destitute of address, and length of days, attending constant studies and vivacity of genius: in short, with every art, to draw every creature; Papist and Protestant; zealot and freethinker, into his scheme [b].

After such an exordium, one cannot help figuring to himself what a surprize, so strange a piece of news must needs excite in this reverend Assembly, to find themselves exposed again so unexpectedly, to the effects of so direful a conspiracy; and what an impatience it would create, to hear the rest, and to learn, by what arts and instruments, this calamity was to be brought upon them; which the Archdeacon proceeds to disclose in the following manner:

That there were certain Loyolites in France, who had assumed of a sudden a new character, and blazed out most fastidious Hypercritics: that these had entered into a vow, to deprive us of all our learning and religion at once, and by one desperate furious push, to stab the protestant cause to the heart, with the admired spirit of incredulity and

[a] See pag. 1, 2, 3.

[b] Pag. 11, 12, 18. &c.

freethinking: that their method of doing it was; to make all the world believe, that *the ancient writers of Greece and Rome, were either figments, or worthless triflers*; and by that means, to confound and dissipate all our notions in *Chronology, History, Laws, usages, doctrines ecclesiastical and profane, together with the genius and vitals of all the dead languages*: that, in the execution of this design, they had already gone so far, as to reproach *Thucydides and Xenophon very tartly, with modern Gallicisms and suspicious phraseologies*; and had superciliously lashed all the rest; *Diodorus, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Livy, Justin, Suetonius, Quintilian, Tacitus, Plutarch, Athenæus, Dion Cassius, with multitudes of others, as mere counterfeit Romances*; the works of recent *Sophists, Impostors, and Fabulators* [c].

And lest any one should interrupt him here, and ask; how *the protestant cause could be ruined and our whole religion overturned*, by the loss onely of these *Pagan writers*, he clears up that doubt in the following words, by declaring; that this blow, *how daring soever, was but the introduction to the fatal stroke, which was to insue*; for that *the Clements, the Chrysostoms, the Jeroms, and the Austins, were to fall the next in this massacre*; and *the ancient Councils themselves, both general and provincial, would not long survive them* [d].

[c] See pag. 3, 4, 5.

[d] Page 6.

This is the substance of his plot, as it is set forth by himself. For if we *could penetrate the very marrow*, as he says, or, in a metaphor still more elegant, *the very vitals of the dead languages themselves*, we could not find any words, so well suited to his subject, or so adapted, to spread wonder and amazement thro' an Assembly, as his own. As to the success of the plot, he represents it every where, as most easy and probable. For the Papists would favour it of course, as it could not fail of reducing all Christendom under the absolute power of Rome; and *the Protestants, among whom a fantastical passion for novelties, and a brisk giddy spirit of Pyrrhonism was rising very fast [e], would rejoice at any blow given to ecclesiastical history and the Scriptures, and readily give up even their favourite Virgils and Horaces, &c. on condition only, that the Jeroms might be sacrificed at the same time [f].*

Now whatever surprize the first opening of this speech might give, either to the hearer or reader, the conclusion, I dare say, will give as great, to find *this crafty projection*, as he calls it, which he has been dressing up with such solemnity and laboured pomp of words, as a most desperate plot of the Romish Church, to be nothing at last but the stale and senseless whim of a single old Jesuit, formed by no concert or confederacy with any set of men in the world, and

[e] See page 12.

[f] Pag. 22, 23.

published about forty years ago without any other effect whatsoever, than of being laughed at ever since by all men of sense, and particularly contemned at *Rome*, as I have been certainly informed, as the mere delirium of a doting Critic.

One would not easily conceive, at the first thought, what should put it into this Archdeacon's head, to think of alarming the Provincial Clergy, at this time of day, with the vain terrors of such an exploded and obsolete tale. But this scheme was artfully laid, and the time exactly hit by him. He saw, that a *Panic* was spread over the land; that people's heads were filled with nothing, but conspiracies and Popish invasions; that this was the moment, to make a figure with his plot, and if the discovery was postponed, the merit of it would be lost. *He struck in roundly* therefore, as he expresses it, *and like a true man of craft, with this taste and turn of the age* [g]; and snatched the opportunity of displaying his abilities before his reverend brethren, and while he was rousing all their fears, of administering comfort to them at the same time, by shewing; what a champion they had got to defend them; that the old Jesuit himself could not outdo him, in those very talents of his, which he had been enumerating; *the acuteness of his prolific head; the extent of his various learning; the force of his dogmatical language*: and that the

[g] See pag. 12.

Freethinkers were nothing to him, even in their own arts, and the management of those *everlasting arms of theirs* in which their strength lay; *the alertness of their sneers; their affectation of appearing significant in crudition, and their fluent pompous shew of some depth in letters* [b].

But surely, no *Archidiaconal Charge* was ever more learnedly trifling, or pompously absurd than this. He confesses, that this conceit of the Jesuit raised so general an outcry against it, among the *Papists themselves*, that he was obliged to recant it, as soon almost as it was divulged; that his own *Society of the Jesuits published a formal protestation against it* [i]; and that the learned of all the other Orders both in *France and Italy*, sharply declared their abhorrence of it [k]. Yet this despicable project of a cloistered visionary, conceived so many years ago, retracted by himself, censured by his own Order, and abhorred by all the other Orders of *France and Italy*, is here puffed and dressed out by our Archdeacon, in an Assembly of English Clergy, as a most dreadful plot, spreading its infection far and wide, threatening ruin to our whole religion, *fire and sword to all Protestants* [l].

In opening the evidences of this plot, he declares from his own knowledge, *that it was certainly begun, and is carried on to this day, with art*

[b] See pag. 22, 23. [i] (Note †). [k] Pag. 20.

[l] Pag. *ibid.*

and success; and is assisted also by a favourable concurrence of circumstances in this very age [m]: that one great man in France had loudly proclaimed a very high esteem for the author: that another person at Amsterdam had the confidence to suppose gravely, even in print, that the Jesuit's new system would bear a debate among the learned, and by degrees gain a strong, if not the ablest party to its side [n]: and if any farther proof be required, he assures us, that though it may justly seem so extravagant and chimerical, as to make some good men believe it incapable of doing any mischief, yet he can prove, on the contrary, that it has already spread a taint too far: among some, for catholic advantages, among others, for want of knowing that secret, or from passionate biasses to their coins, or to favour their Pyrrhonism [o].

The reader will be apt to wonder here again, why our Archdeacon is not more explicit and particular in declaring his proofs, in a cause, which, of all others, seems to want them the most. *He knows, that the plot is carried on with success to this day; and can prove, he says, that it has spread a taint too far: yet after he has prepared us, to expect the history and progress of the infection, and what particular persons it has tainted in this and that nation; he drops all that at once, as if there were some latent fore in it, too tender for him to touch. But it is not very difficult to guess at the reason: it is his*

[m] See page 11.

[n] Page 10.

[o] Page vi. 20.

great regard for certain good friends of his whom he is loth to impeach, as accomplices in this *Jesuitical plot*, which yet he must necessarily do, whenever he is forced to speak out; I mean the *Tunfalls* and the *Marklands* of our own country: who, with that same *malignant spirit against the ancients*, of which he talks [p], have been lately making the same *desperate furious push*, in this very protestant land, to deprive us of the works of Cicero, by adding them to the Jesuit's list of *counterfeit romances*, and shewing them to be *the fragments of those same busy Sophists and recent Fabulators*. For of all the learned in this kingdom, there are none, who, like the *Loyolites of France*, have ventured, to assume that new character, of *blazing and fastidious Hypercritics*, or have pushed their protestant *Pyrrhonism* so far, as they.

Yet after all, which I have been saying of the Archdeacon's Speech, I must do him the justice to own, that there are many observations occasionally interspersed in it, both exceedingly curious, and intirely new. I shall just give one of them, as a specimen of the rest; by which he informs his reverend brethren, *that the real necessities of learned authors, in these times of ours, are extremely great; nay almost infinitely so, beyond any thing, which the multitude can imagine* [q]. This is a discovery so recondite, and remote from vulgar apprehension, that it could not pos-

[p] Page 17. Note [t]. [q] See pag. 26.

sibly be made by any, but himself. For, though his modesty would fain conceal it, he is but drawing his own picture, under the character, which he gives of *those great lights and pillars, of Protestantism, whom he proposes to the Clergy as patterns of their studies: men, who spent their whole lives in the pursuit of erudition, penetrated the very marrow of all the learned languages, traversed, with the same zeal, every ancient, and monument they could find, had all antiquity before them in one grand comprehensive view, and attain to that abounding richness in learning which rendered them the glories of their age, and a scourge and terror to any bold superficial pretenders, who should offer to impose upon the public any mischievous sophistries or chicanery of science* [r]. For, how could any man know, the real necessities of such *deep scholars*, as these, if he himself was not as profound, as they? or how indeed can any one else, reach even the sense of so deep a discovery; for as to those *bold and superficial pretenders*, whom he justly derides, for skimming onely the surface of literature, *and contenting themselves, as he tells us, with a few select authors, the most eminent, and elegant in each class* [s]; they would be apt to pronounce at once, that there is no sense at all in it.

But, if I may presume to offer my opinion, the sense of it, I think, will be found clear and good by a due attention to the context; in which the Archdeacon, having first taken oc-

[r] Pag. 27, 28.

[s] Pag. 27.

caſion to declare, *that our Church is far inferior to the Romiſh in the proviſion of emoluments for the clergy*, artfully introduces his obſervation, by way of complaint, or petition, as it were, to the public, on behalf of himſelf, and all the other learned authors, among the Clergy, that, whereas their learning, in theſe proteſtant days, is infinitely ſuperior, to what it was in the Popiſh, yet our Governors do not conſider, that *their real neceſſaries* are increaſed to them likewiſe, in the ſame proportion. For though he has not given any reaſons, to confirm this, yet the truth of it may be demonſtrated by a known and memorable fact. For inſtance; *Erasmus*, an *Author*, competently *learned*, for thoſe Popiſh times, was ſupplied with all *real neceſſaries*, and a large overplus beſides, from one ſingle benefice, conferred upon him by an *Archbiſhop of Canterbury*: our Archdeacon, on the contrary, in theſe proteſtant times, holds the ſame benefice, which *Erasmus* then held, with a ſecond ſtill better, and the profits of an Archdeaconry into the bargain; yet out of *the infinite ſuperiority of his learning*, wants the addition ſtill of more preferment, to *ſupply his infinite want of real neceſſaries*.

But I am drawn inſenſibly too far, and waſting too much time in pointing out the ſolemn trifles, and elaborate nonſenſe of this ſtrange ſpeech. My chief purpoſe, in taking notice of it, was of a more ſerious kind; to ſhew, by the example of this very performance, to what poor ſhifts

shifts this *Defender of the primitive monks, and their miracles*, will naturally be reduced, whenever he finds it expedient, to give a public testimony of his zeal against *Rome*; and while he pretends to be fighting against Popery, how he will be driven, by the force of his principles, to make but a mock-fight of it, a mere theatrical shew, and to combat onely phantasms of his own dressing up.

This, I say, is the necessary consequence of his principles; of *that superstitious veneration of the primitive Fathers, and that implicit faith in Ecclesiastical History*, which it has been the business of his life and studies, to inculcate. For I have already shewn, by facts and instances produced in this Introductory treatise, how those Divines of our Church, who carry the authority of the Fathers so high, as to make them *the guides and interpreters of our religion*, and who *appeal to them especially in our controversies with the Papists*, preclude themselves of course, from attacking any of those principal corruptions, for the sake of which, the Protestants found it necessary, to separate themselves from the communion of *Rome*. Yet our Archdeacon maintains still, as we have seen, in this speech, that the Antient Fathers and Primitive Councils, the *Clements*, the *Chrysostoms*, the *Jeroms*, and the *Austins*, are the very bulwarks of Protestantism, and the instruments, through which *we may most glaringly expose to*
every

every common eye, the unscriptural and unprimitive crudities of the Romish Church [t].

Now, as in all disputes, the readiest way to find out the truth, is, by reducing them, as far as it is possible, to quæstions of fact, and to the trial of our senses, so in this, I shall refer myself to a fact, which I have endeavoured to exemplify in the foregoing work, with regard to those very Fathers, to whom the Archdeacon appeals; and particularly, to *Chrysoftom, Jerom, and Austin*; concerning whom, I have there affirmed, and do now again affirm, *that they have all severally taught, and practised, and warmly recommended to the practice of all Christians, certain rites and doctrines, which, upon their authority, and example, are received and practised at this day by the Romish Church, but condemned and rejected by Protestant Churches, as unscriptural, superstitious and idolatrous.* If the Archdeacon allows this fact, every one will see at once, without asking his opinion any farther, on which side those Fathers are to be ranged: if he denies it, he must deny at the same time, that those passages, which I have produced in proof of it, are really to be found in them; or otherwise, in spite of any distinction or comment, which he can frame upon them, every man of sense will allow the fact to be true.

But of all the primitive Fathers, *Jerom* seems to be the peculiar favorite of our Archdeacon,

[t] See pag. 2, &c.

and,

and, as we may collect from this very speech, is supposed by him, to be of more eminent service to us than any of them, both against the *Papists* and the *Freebinkers*: for which reason, I have chosen to employ the few pages, that remain, in considering his particular merit and principles a little more precisely: and with that view, shall propose another fact or two, drawn from his writings; which will enable the reader to form a clear judgement of his character, as far as it relates to the point, now in dispute, between the Archdeacon and myself.

This *Jerom* then, as I have observed in the foregoing work, was a most zealous admirer and promotor of the *monkish life*; and, for the sake of advancing its credit in the world, wrote the lives of two celebrated Monks; the one called *Paul*, and the other *Hilarion*; in which, after he has invoked *that same Holy spirit, which inspired the said Monks, to inspire him also with language, equal to the wonderful acts, which he was going to relate*, he has inserted a number of tales, and miracles, so grossly fabulous, as not to admit the least doubt, of their being absolute forgeries. The *Life of Paul* was published the first, and, as we learn from *Jerom* himself, was treated, as a *mere fable*, by the Free-thinkers, or *Scyllæan dogs*, as he calls them, of those days [u]. Nor is it considered at this day

[u] Unde & nos — cœpentes, maledicorum voces
 tum ab eo opus aggredi- contemnimus: qui olim de-
 in

in any other character, or mentioned by the learned on any other account, than as a proof, of *that passion for fiction and imposture, which possessed the Fathers of the 4th century* [x]. Now whether *Jerom* forged these tales himself, or propagated what he knew to be forged by others, or whether he really believed them, and published onely, what he took to be true; our Archdeacon may chuse which he pleases, I shall not dispute it with him, since the fact, which I would lay before the reader, and with which alone, we are at present concerned, is uncontestable, *that it was one of the principal views of Jerom's zeal and writings, to recommend to all Christians, as the perfection of the Christian life, a species of monkery, not onely abhorred by Protestants, but, in my opinion, more contemptible and superstitious, than any that is professed at this day in the Church of Rome.*

Again, *Jerom*, as I have intimated also above, wrote a little piece or two against *Vigilantius*, in which he treats him, as a most blasphemous Heretic, and gives us all the particular articles of his hæresy, drawn from *Vigilantius's* own words, to the following effect.

trahentes *Paulo meo*, nunc forte detrahent Hilarioni — verum destinato operi imponam manum & *Scyllæos canes* obturata aure transibo. Prolog. in vit. S. Hilarion. Op. T. iv. par. ii. p. 74

[x] Quam fuerint quarti seculi Scriptores fabulis dediti, e vita *Pauli Hieronymiana, ex Athanasiana Antonii*, etc. intelligimus. Dodw. Dissert. in Irenæum, ii. § 55.

“ That

“ That the honors paid to the rotten bones
 “ and dust of the faints and martyrs, by adoring,
 “ kissing, wrapping them up in silk and vessels
 “ of gold, lodging them in their Churches and
 “ lighting up wax candles before them, after the
 “ manner of the Heathens, were the insigms of
 “ Idolatry [y].

“ That the Cœlibacy of the Clergy was an
 “ Hæresy, and their vows of chastity the femi-
 “ nary of lewdness [z].

“ That to pray for the dead, or to desire the
 “ prayers of the dead, was superstitious: and
 “ that the Souls of the departed Saints and
 “ Martyrs were at rest, in some particular place,
 “ whence they could not remove themselves at
 “ pleasure, so as to be present every where to the
 “ prayers of their votaries [a].

[y] *Ais Vigilantium*— os
 fœtidum rursus aperire, &
 putorem spurcissimum contra
 Sanctorum Martyrum pro-
 ferre reliquias, & nos, qui eas
 fuscipimus, appellare cine-
 rarios & idolatras, qui mor-
 tuorum hominum Ossa vene-
 ramur, etc. Vide Hieron.
 Op. T. iv. par. ii. p. 278,
 279, 282, &c.

[z] Dicit— continentiam,
 hæresim; pudicitiam, libidi-
 nis seminarium. Ibid. p. 281.

[a] *Ais enim vel in sinu*
Abrahæ, vel in loco refri-
gerii, vel subter aram Dei
animas Apostolorum & Mar-
tyrum confedisse, nec posse
de suis tumulis, & ubi vo-
luerint, adesse præsentibus—
dicis in libello tuo, quod dum
vivimus, mutuo pro nobis
orare possumus; postquam
autem mortui fuerimus, nul-
lius sit pro alio ex audienda
oratio, etc. Ibid. p. 283,
&c.

“ That

“ That the Sepulchres of the Martyrs ought
 “ not to be worshipped, nor their fasts and vi-
 “ gils to be observed [b].

“ That the signs and wonders, said to be
 “ wrought by their reliques, and at their Se-
 “ pulchres, served to no good end or purpose
 “ of religion [c].”

These were the *sacrilegious* tenets, as *Jerom* calls them, which he could not *bear with patience, or without the utmost grief* [d]; and for which he declares *Vigilantius to be a most detestable heretic, venting his foul-mouthed blasphemies against the reliques of the Martyrs, which were working daily signs and wonders.* He bids him, *go into the Churches of those Martyrs, and he would be cleansed from the evil spirit, which possessed him, and feel himself burnt, not by those wax candles, which so much offended him, but by invisible flames, which would force that Dæmon who talked within him, to confess himself to be the same, who had personated a Mercury, perhaps, or a Bacchus, or some other of their Gods among the Heathens* [e]. At which wild rate, this good

[b] Qui Martyrum neget sepulcra veneranda, damandas dicit esse vigilias— Ibid. 281.

[c] Argumentatur contra signa & virtutes, quæ in Basilicis Martyrum fiunt, p. 285.

[d] Fatebor tibi dolorem

meum. Sacrilegium tantum patienter audire non possum, p. 280.

[e] Ingredere basilicas Martyrum, & aliquando purgaberis: invenies ibi multos socios tuos; & nequaquam cereis Martyrum, qui tibi

Father raves on, through several pages, in a strain much more furious, than the most bigotted Papist would use at this day, in the defence of the same rites.

Let our Archdeacon then speak directly to this fact, and tell us, which of these two is acting here the Protestant part, and serving the Protestant cause: whether it be *Jerom* or *Vigilantius*: whether the *Primitive Father*, who, by *lies* and *forgeries*, so fiercely maintains the honor of *monkery* and *reliques*; or the *Primitive Heretic*, who, by the Principles of reason and the Gospel, so firmly rejects them.

But he has told us already in his speech, that the *Jeroms* are the men, who must enable us, to expose *the unprimitive crudities of the Romish principles and practices*: and he will try again, perhaps on this occasion, what he has tried with success on others, to accommodate these very facts to his own system: and by an art, which he has learnt from *Jerom* himself, will teach us, “ that we ought to distinguish between *the dog-*
 “ *matical and the agonistical style*; that in the
 “ first, indeed, truth is the object aimed at, but
 “ in the second, nothing but victory; that sin-
 “ cerity therefore is necessary in the one, but art
 “ only in the other: that *Jerom* was not here
 “ dogmatizing, but fighting with an enemy;
 duplicit, sed flammis invisibilibus combarearis — etc. p. 286.

“ and

“ and in that case, according to his custom, not
 “ saying what he thought true, but what was
 “ necessary to his cause, and catching up any
 “ words, to throw at him, which would best
 “ serve, to knock him down : then he will cry
 “ out again, in the same lamentable style, *that*
 “ *this is not the first time, that poor St. Jerom has*
 “ *been thus mangled and misrepresented [f]* ; that
 “ I have suppressed the very expressions, which
 “ would have cleared up the matter and justified
 “ the purity of his principles ; for when *Vigilan-*
 “ *tius* charges him with Idolatry, for worship-
 “ ing rotten bones, in the manner above-
 “ mentioned, that I had omitted to acquaint the
 “ reader, how *Jerom* denies the charge, and de-
 “ clares, *that they paid no divine worship to any*
 “ *thing but to God, that by honoring the reliques*
 “ *of the Martyrs, they meant to adore him, whose*
 “ *Martyrs they were ; and gave honor to the*
 “ *servants, that the honor of the servants might re-*
 “ *dound to their Lord, who says, He that receiveth*
 “ *you receiveth me [g].*” And what is this after
 all, but the same trifling and evasive distinction,
 with which the *Romanists* defend the same prac-
 tices at this day, and shift off that charge of Ido-
 latry, which is urged against them by the He-
 retical Protestants ?

[f] Honoramus autem
 reliquias Martyrum, ut eum,
 cujus sunt Martyres, adore-
 mus. Honoramus servos, ut
 honor fervorum redundet ad
 Dominum ; qui ait ; Qui vos

fufcipit, me fufcipit. Hieron.
 Op. T. iv. par. ii. p. 279.

[g] See Dr. Chapman's
 defence of Jerom—in Mis-
 cellan. Tracts, pag. 30. &c.

But to pursue this point a little farther. There is another short passage, in the same work of *Jerom*, where he urges *Vigilantius*, in the following manner: “ That if it were such a sacrilege, “ or impiety, as *Vigilantius* contends, to pay “ those honors to the reliques of the Saints ; “ then *the Emperor Constantius* must needs be a “ sacrilegious person, who translated the *holy reliques of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy, to Constantinople* : then *Arcadius Augustus* also must be “ held sacrilegious, who translated the bones of “ *the blessed Samuel* from *Judæa*, where they had “ lain so many ages, into *Thrace* : then all the “ Bishops likewise were not onely sacrilegious, “ but stupid too, who submitted to carry a thing, “ the most contemptible, and nothing but mere “ dust, in silk and vessels of gold : and lastly, “ then the people of all the Churches must “ needs be fools, who went out to meet those “ holy reliques, and received them, with as much “ joy, as if they had seen the Prophet himself, “ living, and present among them : for the procession was attended by swarms of people, “ from *Palesfine*, even unto *Chalcedon*, singing “ with one voice the praises of Christ, who were “ yet adoring *Samuel* perhaps, and not Christ, “ whose Prophet and Levite *Samuel* was [b].”

Now let the Archdeacon declare once more, what it is, that we must say and think, of these

[b] Ergo—Sacrilegus fuit Constantius Imperator, &c. Ibid. p. 282, 3.

translations and processions of holy reliques, which were solemnized, as *Jerom* here describes them, with such pomp and pageantry of devotion, by the Emperors, Bishops, people, and all Christian Churches of those Primitive times. Must we, with *Vigilantius*, call them acts of impiety, superstition and stupidity; or with *Jerom*, treat such an opinion as blasphemous and heretical? but whatever answer he may give, we may venture to affirm, without waiting for it, what is sufficient for my purpose, and notorious to all, who have heard or seen, what passes in the *Church of Rome*, that *Jerom's* account of *those primitive reliques and their translations*, is the very form, and pattern, by which *the Romanists translate, receive and venerate their holy reliques* at this day.

I have now said enough, for the present occasion, concerning the use of the Fathers, and particularly of *Jerom*, with regard to our controversies with the Papists, yet cannot put an end to this Postscript, without adding a word or two, on what the Archdeacon has farther intimated, with respect to the same *Jerom*, and another sort of enemies *the Freethinkers*; who make him likewise, as he would persuade us, the particular object of their spleen, and would be glad, as well as the Papists, to get rid of him at any rate. Now if this had been said of the Freethinkers onely, in popish countries, there would have been some sense in it; but as it is here applied,

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there is certainly none at all. For in the Romish Church, there are many, without doubt, who from a freedom of thinking, superior to that of the vulgar, must needs condemn the whole system of their monkery, their worship of Saints and reliques, their holy water, holy oil, crosses, masses, exorcisms, and all their other superstitions; manifestly contrived, to serve purposes merely secular; to support the power, and increase the wealth of the Clergy: and it is natural to imagine, that men, whose scepticism turned chiefly on those rites and practices, might be particularly galled, by the writings of *Jerom*, or the other Fathers, by whose authority, they were all at first propagated, and are still maintained, and forcibly imposed upon them. But the case is widely different in Protestant countries; where we are neither teized with such fopperies, nor tied down to the authority of the Fathers; and where the Freethinkers consequently have no reason, to fancy themselves specially hurt by any of them; but on the contrary, many obvious reasons, why they should enjoy and rejoice in them all; as affording infinite matter for the sport of sceptical wits; in the credulity, the superstition, the pious frauds, and forged miracles of those primitive times: all which, they have never failed to set forth, as the genuin characters of the Christian Priesthood, and Christian Churches of all ages; and to play them off with all their art, so as to make them bear against religion itself; and they bear

indeed in the strongest manner against the religion of *Rome*, as being wholly founded, and still supported by those very arts. But the Protestants stand clear, and unconcerned in the dispute; and have nothing to do, but to look on, and divert themselves with the issue of it. For their religion rests on quite another foot, on the single, but solid foundation of the sacred Scriptures; unmixed with rubbish of antient tradition, or antient Fathers; and independent on the characters and writings of any men whatsoever, except of Moses and the Prophets; Christ and the Apostles. But when Protestant Divines, urged on by an unhappy zeal, or the vanity of displaying their superior learning, think fit, to take up the quarrel, as their own; and when *Archdeacons* especially, and *Lambeth Chaplains*, come forth, with a sort of oracular authority, to defend those primitive frauds and forgeries, and declare the cause of the Fathers, to be the common cause of all Christians; then the affair indeed becomes serious; for this adds a real force and sting to the railleries of the Sceptics; turns their slight cavils, into grave objections, and points them directly against Protestantism itself.



A N
I N Q U I R Y
I N T O

The MIRACULOUS POWERS, etc.

INOW procede, according to my promise, to a more precise and accurate Discussion of the argument of the *Introductory Discourse*, and to open all the particular proofs, which induced me finally to embrace it, with that freedom and impartiality, which becomes every ingenuous and disinterested inquirer after truth: and, that I may lay the whole quæstion before the reader in the clearest light, I propose to observe the following method:

I. To draw out, in their proper order, all the principal testimonies, which relate to the miraculous gifts of the Church, as they are found in the writings of the Fathers from the earliest ages, after the days of the Apostles. Whence we shall see, at one view, the whole evidence, by which they have hitherto been supported.

II. To

II. To throw together all, which those Fathers also have delivered, concerning the condition of the persons who are said to have been indued with those gifts, and to have wrought the miracles, to which they appeal.

III. To illustrate the particular characters and opinions of the Fathers, who attest those miracles; so as to enable us to determine with more exactness, what degree of credit may be due to their testimony.

IV. To review all the several kinds of miracles, which are pretended to have been wrought, and to observe, from the nature of each, how far the credibility of them may reasonably be suspected.

V. To refute some of the most plausible objections, which have hitherto been made by my antagonists, or which the prejudices and prepossessions of many pious Christians may be apt to suggest to the general turn of my argument.

I. In collecting all the facts and testimonies, which relate to the present argument, from the earliest antiquity, after the days of the Apostles, our first thoughts are carried of course to the *Apostolic* Fathers, that is, to those, who had lived and conversed with the Apostles, and who, by their special appointment, were ordained to suc-
cede

cede them in the Government of the Church. For as there are several of this character, whose writings still remain to us, *St. Barnabas*, *St. Clemens*, *St. Ignatius*, *St. Polycarp*, *St. Hermes*, so it is natural to expect, that, in these valued remains, the History of the miraculous gifts, which are so much celebrated by the writers of the New Testament, should be carried on still in the same manner by these their immediate successors, through the next generation. For if any such gifts had been actually subsisting in their days, it is highly probable, that men of their eminent zeal and piety, who had seen the wonderful effects of them, under the management of the Apostles, and must themselves have possessed a large share of them, would have made some appeal or reference to them, in their circular epistles to the Churches, as their predecessors had done, for the honor of the Gospel, and the credit of their own ministry. But instead of this, it is remarkable, that there is not the least claim or pretension, in all their several pieces, to any of those extraordinary gifts, which are the subject of this inquiry; nor to any standing power of working miracles, as residing still among them, for the conversion of the Heathen world. The whole purpose of their writings is, to illustrate the excellence and purity of the Christian Doctrine; and the whole power of their ministry seems to have lain, in the innocent and amiable character of their lives, and in the

the

the pious, charitable, and fervent strain of their pastoral exhortations.

They speak indeed in general, of certain *spiritual Gifts*, as abounding among the Christians of that age: yet these cannot reasonably be interpreted to mean any thing more, than the *ordinary gifts and graces* of the Gospel, *faith, hope, and charity; the love of God and of man*; which they all recommend in the warmest terms, and appear to have possessed in the highest degree. *Archbishop Wake* however, who has translated their works into *English*, says, that, *in all probability, they were indued with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that there are sufficient indications of it in their writings* [1]: “ which he
 “ endeavours to confirm, not by any facts or
 “ express testimonies, drawn from themselves,
 “ but by inferences onely or conjectures,
 “ grounded on a supposed frequency of those
 “ indowments in that age, and the communi-
 “ cation of them, as he says, to much lesser and
 “ worser men; on the sanctity of their lives,
 “ and the greatness of the stations, to which
 “ they were called by the Apostles; and on the
 “ accounts of them, transmitted to us by their
 “ Successors: from all which he concludes, that
 “ they were not onely instructed by persons in-
 “ spired, but were themselves also in some mea-
 “ sure inspired too, or indued with the extraor-
 “ dinary gifts of the Holy Ghost [2].” But

[1] See Prelim. Disc. c. x. § 11, 12.

[2] *Ib.* § 18, 23.

whatever gifts of this sort they may be supposed to have possessed, it is certain at least, as the same Translator of their works takes occasion to inculcate, that their indowments were *far inferior both in their kind and degree*, to those of their Predecessors, the Apostles [1].

But the learned *Mr. Dodwell*, a writer of a more sanguin complexion, peremptorily declares, from the mere title or address of *St. Ignatius's* Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*, that miracles subsisted in great abundance in those days; because that Church is there styled, *blest with every good gift, and wanting in no good gift* [2]. Yet these words, as they are explained by the context, manifestly signify nothing more, than the ordinary gifts of the Gospel, *Faith and Charity*: for the whole passage runs thus: *To the Church of God the Father, and of the beloved Jesus Christ, which God hath mercifully blest with every good gift, being filled with Faith and Charity, so as to be wanting in no good gift* [3]. In another Epistle likewise of *St. Ignatius*, to the *Romans*, written on his journey towards *Rome*, whether he was going to suffer martyrdom, there are these words; “ I am willing to die for God, “ unless you hinder me. I beseech you, that “ you shew not an unseasonable good will to-

[1] See Prelim. Disc. c. x. § 11, 23.

[2] Dissertat. in Iren. ii. § 7.

[3] Ἠλεημένη ἐν παντί χα-

ρίσματι, περιπληροποιημένη ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ, ἀνυστερήτω ὑπόσθη πάντος χαρίσματος. Epist. ad Smyrn.

“wards me : suffer me to be food for the wild
 “beasts, by whom I shall attain unto God : for
 “I am the wheat of God, and shall be ground
 “by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be
 “found the pure bread of Christ, &c. [1].”
 From which words, the same learned person
 again infers, *that the prayers of the primitive
 Christians had the power to disable the wild beasts
 from assaulting the Martyrs, who were exposed to
 them in the Amphitheatres* [2]. Yet the passage
 itself has not the least reference to prayers, or to
 any thing miraculous, but to the ordinary en-
 deavours and intercession of the Christian bre-
 thren at *Rome*, who offered to use their interest to
 preserve him from that cruel death, which he
 was then going to suffer : to which sense it is
 expressly restrained, in the relation of his Mar-
 tyrdom, written by those who accompanied him
 in this very journey, and were present at his
 death, by whom we are told ; “that the bre-
 “thren, who came out to meet him on his ap-
 “proach to that city, and were zealous for his
 “safety, *undertook to appease the people*, so that
 “when he came to be exposed to the wild
 “beasts in the Amphitheatre, *they should not de-
 “fire his destruction* : but the Saint over-ruled,

[1] Παράκαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μὴ
 εἶναι ἀκατα- γήνοθι ρο-
 αῖσθι μὲν ὁμοίαν τῆς Βεζᾶ, &c.
 Ad Rom. c. iv.

[2] Ex Epistola ad Ro-
 manos intelligimus, Martyri-
 bus nonnullis datum, ne pos-

sent in eos bestie immisce-
 rent. Proinde illud a *Ro-
 manis* enixissimis precibus
 contendit, ne eorum oratio-
 nibus id in sua causa contin-
 geret. Diss. Iren. ii. § 30.

“ *and commanded them to be quiet* [1].” And to the same sense also Dr. *Cave* has interpreted it, in his *Life of this Saint*. “ The Christians at Rome, says he, came out to meet and entertain him — and when some of them did but intimate, that possibly the people might be taken off from desiring his death ; he expressed a pious indignation, intreating them to cast no rubs in his way, that might hinder him, now he was hastening to his crown [2].”

And in truth, all the other expressions of these Fathers, which are commonly understood to signify the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, may be interpreted more rationally and more agreeably to the general turn of their writings to denote onely the ordinary graces of the Gospel, faith and charity ; which they constantly extol, as superior to all other perfections ; as *things wonderful and admirable* ; and *the peculiar gifts of God* [3] : nay in some places,

[1] See Relat. of Martyrd. of S. *Ignat.* § 9, 10, 12.

[2] See *Cave's* Lives of the Saints, Vol. i. p. 105. § 8.

[3] Clem. i. Epist. ad Corinth. c. xlix, l. It. *Ignat.* Ep. ad Ephes. xiv.

Thus when St. *Clemens* tell the *Corinthians*, that *they had all been blessed with a large Effusion of the Holy Spirit*, [§ 11.] yet this effusion, as it appears from the context,

was not of a kind which conferred any extraordinary

powers, but onely pious affections and good inclinations. And in the same

Epistle, where he is exhorting them to submit themselves one to another, according to *the gift*, which

had been bestowed upon each : he means nothing more by *that gift*, or *charisma*, as he calls it, than the different talents, abilities, and

they

they seem even to disclame all gifts of a more extraordinary kind. Thus *Polycarp*, in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, says; “these things, “ my brethren, I took not the liberty to write to “ you of myself, concerning righteoufness, but “ you before encouraged me to it. For neither “ I, nor any other such as I am, can come up “ to the wisdom of the blessed and renowned “ *Paul*. And in the same Epistle he declares, “ that it was not granted to him, to practise “ that, which is written in the Scripture, *Be “ angry and sin not, and let not the sun go down “ upon your wrath* [1].” St. *Ignatius* also, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, says; “these things I “ prescribe to you, not as if I were some body “ extraordinary, for tho’ I am bound for his “ name, I am not yet perfect in *Jesus Christ*, but “ now I begin to learn, and speak to you, as to “ fellow-disciples. For I ought to have been “ stirred up by you in faith, in admonition, “ &c. [2].”

This same Saint indeed, in one or two of his Epistles, seems to intimate, that the knowledge of certain events had been communicated to him by the Spirit. Thus, in his Epistle to the *Philadelphians*, speaking of the earnest exhortations, which he had given them, to unity and sub-

advantages, whether natural characters of men, § 38.

or acquired, of *strength, wisdom, riches, continence, &c.* by [1] Ep. ad Philipp. c. iii. it. c. xii.

which Providence thinks fit [2] Ad Ephes. c. iii. to distinguish the different

mission to their *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, he says ; “ some people suspected, that I was acquainted before hand with the divisions among you : but he is my witness, for whom I am bound, that I did not know it from any human flesh, but the spirit declared it, speaking thus, *Do nothing without your Bishop, &c.*” [1] from which Dr. *Wake* takes occasion to infer, *that he was indued with a large Portion of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost* [2] : yet I do not find, that any other Commentator has ventured to build any thing miraculous or supernatural upon it.

It is related likewise of *Polycarp*, in the antient narrative of his martyrdom, “ how in the time of that persecution, in which his life was particularly fought for by the Heathen Magistrates, he withdrew himself from *Smyrna*, by the advice of his friends, into a little village, where he spent his days and nights in prayer, with a few, who accompanied him ; and as he was praying, a vision was offered to him, three days before he was taken, in which he saw his pillow on fire : whereupon, turning presently to his companions, he said prophetically, I must certainly be burnt alive.” The same narrative calls him also a *Prophetic teacher* ; and declares, *that every word, which he uttered, had either been fulfilled, or would be fulfilled* [3].

[1] Ad Ephes. c. vii. [2] See Prelim. Treat. c. x. § 13.

[3] Vid. Mart. r. Polyc. c. v, xvi.

Whence some later writers have affirmed, that he was indued with a spirit of prophecy, and foretold every thing, that was to happen to him. But the foresight of his death, and the manner of it, in the time of a cruel persecution, when his person was particularly hunted from village to village, as the principal and destined sacrifice, may reasonably be considered as the effect of common prudence, without recurring to any thing miraculous.

Here then we have an interval of about half a century, the earliest and purest of all Christian Antiquity after the days of the Apostles, in which we find not the least reference to any standing power of working miracles, as exerted openly in the Church, for the conviction of unbelievers; but, on the contrary, the strongest reason to presume, that the extraordinary gifts of the Apostolic age were by this time actually withdrawn; and the Gospel left to make its way by its own strength, and the authority of those credentials, and original miracles, with which Christ had furnished it, as an effectual security of its success and triumphs over the powers of the earth. Yet before we take leave of these Apostolic Fathers, it may be proper to observe, for the prevention of unnecessary cavils; that, if from the passages referred to above, or from any other, which may be found in them, it should appear probable to any, that they were favored on some occasions, with *extraordinary illuminations, visions, or divine impressions*, I shall
not

not dispute that point with them, but remind them onely, that the gifts of that sort were merely personal, granted for their particular comfort, and reaching no farther than to themselves; and do not therefore in any manner affect or relate to the quæstion now before us.

But if the Apostolic writers have left us in the dark, with regard to our present argument, their Successors, it must be owned, as far as their authority reaches, have cleared it from all obscurity, by their strong, explicit, and repeated attestations of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, which were constantly and publicly exerted in the Christian Church, thro' each succeeding age.

Justin Martyr, who is supposed to have written his first Apology within fifty years after the days of the Apostles, says, “ There are prophetic gifts among us at this day, and both men
“ and women indued with extraordinary powers
“ by the Spirit of God [1].” And he frequently appeals, to what every one might see with
“ his own eyes, in every part of the world, and
“ particularly in *Rome*, in the case of persons
“ possessed with Devils; who were cured and
“ set free, and the Devils themselves baffled and
“ driven away by the Christians, adjuring or exorcising them in the name of *Jesus*, when all

[1] Βασίλειος γὰρ ἡμῶν ἢ μέγιστον ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔχουσιν, ὡς φησὶ καὶ χρῆσιμα λαῶν ἐσσι, etc. καὶ πικρὴ ἢ ἄλυτοι ἴσθαι ἢ δαλίας ἢ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ σμῆνα

“ other Exorcists and Inchanters had tried in
 “ vain to help them [1].”

Irenæus, who was contemporary with *Justin*, but wrote somewhat later, and lived much longer, affirms; “ that all, who were truly disciples of *Jesus*, receiving grace from him, wrought miracles in his name, for the good of mankind, according to the gift, which each man had received : some cast out Devils, so that those, from whom they were ejected, often turned believers, and continued in the Church : others had the knowledge of future events, visions, and prophetic sayings : others healed the sick by the imposition of hands; that even the dead had been raised, and lived afterwards many years among them : that it was impossible, to reckon up all the mighty works, which the Church performed every day, to the benefit of nations ; neither deceiving, nor making a gain of any, but freely bestowing, what it had freely received [2].” And as to the particular miracle of *raising the dead*, he declares it “ to have been frequently performed on necessary occasions ; when by great fasting, and the joint supplication of the Church of that place, the spirit of the dead person returned into him, and the man was given back to the prayers of the Saints [3].” And again,

[1] Apolog. ii. p. 116. c. lvi. p. 188. Edit. Oxon. vid. etiam p. 95, 303, 370, it. Eub. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. vii.

[2] Advers. Hæres. l. ii. [3] Advers. Hæres. l. ii.

“ we hear many, says he, in the Church indued
 “ with prophetic gifts; speaking with all kind
 “ of tongues; laying open the secrets of men
 “ for the public good; and expounding the
 “ mysteries of God [1].”

Theophilus, Bishop of *Antioch*, who lived in the same age with *Irenæus*, speaking of the *evil and seducing Spirits*, which used to inspire the Poets and Prophets of the Heathen world, says; “ the
 “ truth of this is manifestly shewn; because
 “ those, who are possessed by such Spirits, are
 “ sometimes exorcised even at this day by us, in
 “ the name of the true God; when these se-
 “ ducing Spirits confess themselves to be the
 “ same Dæmons, who had before inspired the
 “ Heathen Poets [2].”

Tertullian, who flourished towards the end of the second, and died in the beginning of the third century, challenges the Heathen Magistrates, “ to call before their tribunals, any
 “ person possessed with a *Devil*: and if the evil
 “ spirit, when exorcised by any Christian what-
 “ soever, did not own himself to be a Devil, as
 “ truly, as in other places, he would falsely call
 “ himself a God, not daring to tell a lie to a
 “ Christian, that then they should take the life
 “ of that Christian: and what is more manifest,
 “ adds he, than this operation; what more con-

c. lvi. p. 186. it. Euseb. [2] Ad. Autolye. l. xxi.
 Hist. Eccl. ibid. p. 37. c. ad calcem Oper.

[1] Advers. Hæres. l. v. Just. Mart. Par 1636.

c. vi. p. 406

“vincing than this proof [1].” In another place, “there is a Sister, says he, among us, “indued with the gifts of revelations, which she “suffers in the Church, during the time of divine service, by an ecstasy in the spirit: she “converses with Angels, and sometimes also “with the Lord: sees and hears mysteries: and “know the hearts of some, and prescribes medicines to those, who want them [2].”

Minucius Felix, who is supposed to have written in the beginning of the third century, addressing himself to his Heathen friend in his Dialogue, called *Octavius*, says; “the greatest “part of you know, what confessions the Dæmons make concerning themselves, as oft as “they are expelled by us out of the bodies of “men, by the torture of our words, and the fire “of our speech. *Saturn* himself, and *Serapis* “and *Jupiter*, and the rest of them, whom you “worship, constrained by the pain, which they “feel, confess what they are: nor in this do “they tell us a lie, though it be to their own “shame, especially when some of your people “are present. Believe them, therefore, to be “Dæmons, from their own testimony, and true “confession. For being adjured by the true and

[1] Edatur hic aliquis sub
tribunalibus vestris, quem
Dæmone agi constet. Justus
a quolibet Christiano loqui
spiritus ille, tam se Dæmonem
confitebitur de vero,

quam Deum alibi de falso—
quid isto opere manifestius?
quid hac probatione fidelius?
Apolog. c. xxiii.

[2] De Anima, § 9.

“only

“ onely God, they unwillingly and wretchedly
 “ betray their uneasiness in the bodies of men ;
 “ and either fly out instantly, or vanish gradu-
 “ ally, in proportion as the faith of the patient,
 “ or the grace of the agent assists towards the
 “ cure [1].”

Origen, who lived at the same time with *Minu-
 cius*, though something younger, declares ; “ that
 “ there remained still among the Christians of
 “ his days, the manifest indications of that Holy
 “ Spirit, which was seen in the shape of a Dove.
 “ For they drive away Devils, says he ; per-
 “ form many cures ; foresee things to come ;
 “ according to the will of the divine Word :
 “ and though *Celsus* and the *Jew*, who is intro-
 “ duced by him, will make a jest, of what I am
 “ going to say, I will say it nevertheless ; that
 “ many people, as it were against their wills,
 “ have been brought over to Christianity, by
 “ the Spirit giving a sudden turn to their
 “ minds, and offering visions to them either by
 “ day or by night ; so that instead of hating
 “ the word, they became ready even to lay down
 “ their lives for it. I have seen many exam-
 “ ples of this sort ; and should I only set down
 “ such of them, as were transacted in my pre-
 “ sence, I should expose myself to the loud
 “ laughter of the unbelievers, who imagine that
 “ we, like the rest, whom they suspect of forg-
 “ ing such things, are imposing our forgeries

[1] *Minuc. Octav. p. 23. ad calcem Edit. Cyprian.
 per Rigalt. Paris.*

“ also upon them : but God is my witness, that
 “ my sole purpose is, to recommend the religion
 “ of *Jesus*, not by fictitious tales, but by clear
 “ and evident facts [1].”

In another place, he says ; “ that miracles
 “ began with the preaching of *Jesus*, were mul-
 “ tiplied after his ascension, and then again de-
 “ creased ; but that, even in his days, some re-
 “ mains of them continued with a few, whose
 “ souls were cleansed by the word, and a Life
 “ conformable to it. [2].” Again ; some, says
 “ he, in proof of a miraculous power received
 “ through faith in Christ, heal the sick, by in-
 “ voking the name of God over them, and of
 “ *Jesus*, with a recital of some story of his life.
 “ I myself have seen many so healed in difficult
 “ cases ; loss of senses, madness, and innume-
 “ rable other evils, which neither men nor De-
 “ vils could cure [3].” Again ; speaking of
 “ Devils, We are so far, says he, from worship-
 “ ing them, that by prayers and the rehearsal
 “ of some passages of the sacred writ, we drive
 “ them before us ; out of men and places, and
 “ also out of beasts ; for they sometimes attempt
 “ to do mischief also to these [4].” Then as

[1] Cont. Celf. l. i. p. 34,
 35. Edit. Cant.

[2] Σημεῖα δὲ τῆ ἀγίας συνύ-
 μαθῶ κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν τῆς ἰησοῦ
 διδασκαλίας, μετὰ δὲ τινὰ ἀά-
 ληψιν αὐτῶ ἀλείονα ἐθακνῶν,
 ἕτερον δὲ ἐλάττωον. ἀλλῆ κ' εἶν
 ἵτι ἰ ἰ ἰχθη αὐτῶ ἀαρ' ἰλ. γ. α. β.

&c. ib. l. vii. p. 337. it. l. ii.
 62.

[3] Ibid l. iii. p. 124.

[4] Εὐί ὅτε δὲ κ' ἀπο τῶν
 ζων. πολλὰ κ' ἐπὶ τῆ λυ-
 μη κ' τῶν τοιῶτων ἐνεγῶν ἰ τινα
 οἰδαμ. κ. ε. Ibid. l. vii. p. 376

to the method of performing this miracle, “it was not, he says, by any curious, magical, or enchanting arts, but by prayer alone, and certain plain adjurations or exorcisms, which any simple Christian might perform : for even common and illiterate laymen were generally the actors in this case [1].” In which no man was more eminent, than one of his own disciples, *Gregory*, called the *Wonder-worker*, who cast out Devils, not onely by word of mouth, but even by a *message*, or *mandatory letter to them*; as the Ecclesiastical writers have recorded of him [2].

Cyprian, the scholar of *Tertullian*, who wrote about the middle of the third century, speaking of *prophetic visions*, which was the peculiar gift of that age, says; “besides the visions of the night, even boys among us are filled with the Holy Ghost, and in fits of ecstasy, see, hear, and speak things, by which the Lord thinks fit to instruct us [3].” And describing all the various pranks of the Devils, “they insinuate themselves, says he, into the bodies of men, raise terrors in the mind, distortions in the limbs, break the constitution, and bring on diseases — yet adjured by us in the name

[1] Ὡς ὁπίκειν γὰρ ἰδιῶται τὸ πνεῦμα ἁγίου. Ibid. p. 334.

[2] Ὡς καὶ πρῶτον μὲν λαοκίτοι, σὺν ἀλλὰ σημεῖα ἐποίησε, καὶ ἰσχυρῶς διεμαρτύρει, καὶ θαύματα ἐποίησε. Socrate. Hist. l. iv. 27.

[3] Præter nocturnas enim

visiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu sancto puerorum innocens ætas, quæ in ekstasi videt oculis, & audit & loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus monere & instruere dignatur. Epist. ix. Edit. Rigalt. Par.

“ of the true God, they presently yield, confess,
 “ and are forced to quit the bodies, which they
 “ possessed. You may see them by our com-
 “ mand, and the secret operation of the divine
 “ power, lashed with scourges, scorched with
 “ fire, tortured by an increase of pains ; howl-
 “ ing, groaning, begging ; confessing whence
 “ they came, and whither they go, even in the
 “ hearing of their own worshippers : and they
 “ either fly out immediately, or vanish gradu-
 “ ally, according to the faith of the patient, or
 “ the grace of him, who works the cure [1].”

In another place, treating again on the same miracle, “ It is performed, says he, at this day,
 “ so that the Devil is lashed and burned and
 “ tortured by the Exorcists, with human words,
 “ but a divine power : and when he promises
 “ to go out, and to dismiss the men of God,
 “ he often deceives, and by the same lie of ob-
 “ stinacy and fraud, does what *Pharoah* had
 “ done before, till he is oppressed by the salu-
 “ tary water of Baptism [2].”

[1] Ibid. De Idolor. vanit. p. 206.

[2] Ibid. Epist. lxxvi. p. 154. The example of *Pharoah*, here alluded to, is explained by him in the following manner : King *Pharoah* having struggled and persisted in his perfidy, was able to carry on his resistance so far, till he came to the wa-

ter, where he was subdued and destroyed. For that Sea, as *St. Paul* says, was the Sacrament of Baptism.— And so he shews, how the Devils used to act the same part, when adjured by the Christian Exorcists, and continued to afflict the people of God till they came to the water of Baptism.

Arnobius,

Arnobius, who is supposed to have published his book against the Gentiles, in the year of Christ 303, tells us, “that Christ used to appear sometimes in those days, to just and holy men, not in vain dreams, but in his pure and simple form: and that the mention of his name put the evil spirits to flight; struck their prophets dumb; deprived the Soothsayers of the power of answering; and frustrated the acts of arrogant Magicians; not by the terror or hatred of his name, as the Heathens pretended, but by the efficacy of his superior power [1].”

Lactantius, the disciple of *Arnobius*, who flourished and wrote about the same time, speaking of those Dæmons or evil spirits, says; “that being adjured by the Christians in the name of God, they retire out of the bodies of men; and being lashed by their words, as by scourges, confess themselves to be Dæmons; and even tell their names; the same, which are adored in the Temples; and this even in the presence of their worshipers; yet casting no reproach on religion, but on their own honor, because it is not in their power to lie either to God, in whose name they are ad-

[1] Qui iustissimis viris etiam nunc impollutis, ac diligentibus sese, non per vana insomnia, sed per puræ speciem simplicitatis apparet. Cujus nomen auditum fugat noxios spiritus. Imponit silentium vacibus. Haruspices

inconsultos reddit. Arrogantium Magorum frustrari efficit actiones, non horrore, ut dicitur, nominis, sed majoris licentia potestatis. Lib. i. p. 13. ad calcem Oper. Cyprian. Edit. per Rigalt.

“ jured, or to the just, by whose voice they are tor-
 “ tured : wherefore after many howlings, they
 “ frequently cry out, that they are scourged and
 “ burned, and are going out instantly [1].”

These are the principal testimonies, which as-
 sert the miraculous gifts of the Primitive
 Church, through the three first centuries :
 which might be supported still by many more
 of the same kind, and from the same, as well as
 different writers, if it were necessary [2]. But
 these are sufficient for our purpose : and the
 warmest admirers of those ages, will not scruple,
 I dare say, to risk the fate of the cause upon the
 merit of them : for if these cannot command be-
 lief, the credit of the miracles in quæstion must
 sink at once ; since Christian antiquity can fur-
 nish no other evidence in their favor, half so
 strong and authentic as this.

I shall close this first article with a remark or
 two, which it seems naturally to suggest. It
 has already been observed, that the silence of all
 the Apostolic writers, on the subject of these
 gifts, must dispose us to conclude, that in those
 days they were actually withdrawn. And if
 this conclusion be thought to have any weight
 in it, then surely the pretended revival of them,
 after a cessation of forty or fifty years, and the
 confident attestation of them made by all the

[1] Divin. Institut. lib. ii.
 c. xvi.

[2] See Mr. *Whiston's* Ac-
 count of the *Dæmoniacks*, &c.
 in which he has collected

many more testimonies rela-
 ting to them, to shew, that
 the gift of curing them con-
 tinued to the middle of the
 fourth century.

succeed-

ſucceeding Fathers, cannot fail of infuſing a ſuſpicion of ſome fiction in the caſe. For if they did really ceaſe for ſo long an interval, and at a time, when the Chriſtian cauſe ſeemed to want them the moſt, as being then deprived of it's firſt and ableſt champions, the Apoſtles, we cannot conceive any reaſon, why they ſhould afterwards be revived, when the Church, without any ſuch help, had been gathering more and more ſtrength all that while, by its own natural force. But it is remarkable, that as the Church continued to increaſe in power and credit, ſo it's miraculous gifts are ſaid to have increaſed alſo in the ſame proportion : for tho' by an increaſe of power it certainly ſtood leſs in need of true miracles, yet by the ſame power it became more able to reward, and more likely therefore to excite falſe pretenſions to them.

Again, the difference which every one may perceive, between the miraculous gifts of the Apoſtolic days, and theſe of the following ages, not onely in the nature, but in the manner alſo of exerting them, will greatly confirm the ſuſpicion juſt intimated. The Apoſtles wrought their miracles on ſpecial occaſions, when they felt themſelves prompted to it by a divine impulſe ; but at other times, were deſtitute of that power ; as it is evident from many facts and inſtances, recorded in the New Teſtament. Agreeably to which, tho' they appeal ſometimes, in confirmation of their miſſion, to the miraculous works, which their Maſter had in-

bled

bled them to perform, yet we never find them calling out upon the Magistrates and people, to come and see the mighty wonders, which they were ready to exhibit before their eyes, on all occasions, at any warning, and in all places, whenever they thought fit. Whereas this confident and ostentatious manner of proclaiming their extraordinary powers, carries with it an air of quackery and imposture, as it was practised by the primitive wonder-workers; who, in the affair especially of casting out Devils, challenge all the world to come and see, with what a superiority of power they could chastise and drive those evil spirits out of the bodies of men, when no other *Conjurers, Inchanters, or Exorcists*, either among the Jews or the Gentiles, had been able to eject them.

II. Under this head, I shall briefly lay before the reader, all such notices, as I have been able to draw, from any of the Primitive writers, concerning the persons, who were indued with these extraordinary gifts, and wrought the several miracles, to which they appeal.

Now whenever we think, or speak with reverence, of those primitive times, it is with regard always to these very Fathers, whose testimonies I have been collecting; who have left behind them, in their writings, the genuine specimens of their sanctity and abilities. *Venerable Saints, and eminent lights of the best and purest ages*, as *Dr. Waterland* calls them, and of
admi-

admirable indowments, ordinary and extraordinary [1]. And they were indeed the chief persons and champions of the Christian cause in those days; the Pastors, Bishops, and Martyrs of the Primitive Church. Yet none of these *Venerable Saints* have any where affirmed, that either they themselves, or the Apostolic Fathers before them, were indued with any power of working miracles, but declare onely in general, “that
 “such powers were actually subsisting in their
 “days, and openly exerted in the Church;
 “that they had often seen the wonderful effects
 “of them; and that every body else might see
 “the same, whenever they pleased:” but as to the persons, who wrought them, they leave us strangely in the dark; for instead of specifying their names, conditions, or characters, their general style is, “such and such works are done
 “among us, or by us; by our people; by a
 “few; by many; by our Exorcists: by igno-
 “rant laymen, women, boys, and any sim-
 “ple Christian whatsoever:” but in the particular case of *casting out Devils*, *Origen* expressly says, *that it was performed generally by laymen* [2]. Agreeably to which *Mr. Whiston* declares, “that
 “this gift, which he ranks amongst the great-
 “est of miracles, was wholly appropriated by
 “our Saviour, to the meaner sort of Christians,
 “with an exclusion even of the Clergy, so

[1] Import of the Doctr. of the Title p. 143, 100, 109.

[2] *ὡς ἑπίστατοι καὶ ἰδιώται.* *Con. Cels. vii. 334.*

“ that

“ that, after the days of the Apostles, none of
 “ the sacred order ever pretended to it [1].

But of what condition soever the actors were, it is certain, that in the performance of their miracles, they were always charged with fraud and imposture by their adversaries. *Lucian* tells us, that whenever any crafty Juggler, expert in his trade, and who knew how to make a right use of things, went over to the Christians, he was sure to grow rich immediately, by making a prey of their simplicity [2]. And *Celsus* represents all the Christian wonder-workers, as mere vagabonds and common cheats, “ who rambled
 “ about to play their tricks at fairs and mar-
 “ kets; not in the circles of the wiser and bet-
 “ ter sort, for among such they never ventured
 “ to appear; but wherever they observed a set
 “ of raw young fellows, slaves or fools, there
 “ they took care to intrude themselves and to
 “ display all their arts [3].” *Cecilius* also calls them, a lurking nation; shunning the light; mute in public; prating in corners [4].

[1] See his Account of the Demoniacs, p. 52, 53, 57.

[2] Ἡτοιμὸς παρὰ τὸν τοῦ εἰς αὐτοῦ γὰρ, καὶ περιεργὸς ἀβροποῦ, καὶ πικρὰ μαστὸς ἡδονῶν διὰ τὸ μῦθος, αἰτίας μάλιστ' ὡς ἐστὶν ἐν βραχίονι ἱστοῦ, ἡμετέρας ἀβροποῦς ἰσχυροῦ. De Ment. Peregr. T. ii. p. 568. Ed. Var.

[3] Ὁ δὲ γινώσκων ἑαυτὸν καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο τῆς χάριτος τοῦ πνεύματος, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς μαστὸς ἀπὸ τῶν παθῶν, παλινοῦσι ἐν τῇ ἀνομιᾷ, &c. Orig. con. Cels. l. vi. p. 284. vid. it. l. iii. p. 141.

[4] Latroscia & lucifugatio; in publicum muti; in angulis garrula, &c. Minac. fol. p. 7.

The same charge was constantly urged against them by all the other enemies of the Christian Faith, *Julian, Porphyry, &c.* of whom *Dr. Waterland* however has taken occasion to declare, *that they had some regard to truth, in what they said, and to public report, and to their own characters* [1]. But as this seems to have been an hasty and inconsiderate concession, made to serve a particular point, which he was then urging, that *the antient Infidels were better men than the moderns*, so I shall lay no stress upon it, but observe onely on the whole, that from these short hints and characters of the primitive wonder-workers, as given both by friends and enemies, we may fairly conclude; that the celebrated gifts of those ages were generally engrossed and exercised by private Christians, chiefly of the laity; who used to travel about from City to City, to assist the ordinary Pastors of the Church, and Preachers of the Gospel, in the conversion of the Pagans, by the extraordinary gifts with which they were supposed to be indued by the spirit of God, and the miraculous works, which they pretended to perform.

And here again, we see a dispensation of things ascribed to God, quite different from that, which we meet with in the New Testa-

[1] "I know not whether " had some regard to truth
 " *Celsus, Porphyry, or Julian,* " and to public report, and
 " would have said such a " to their own characters."
 " thing, in the greatest extre- Import of the *Doct.* of the
 " mity of their rage. They Trin p. 426.

ment. For in those days, the power of working miracles was committed to none but the Apostles, and to a few of the most eminent of the other disciples, who were particularly commissioned to propagate the Gospel, and preside in the Church of Christ: but upon the pretended revival of the same powers in the following ages, we find the administration of them committed, not to those, who were instructed with the government of the Church; not to the successors of the Apostles, to the Bishops, the Martyrs, or the principal Champions of the Christian cause; but to boys, to women, and above all, to private and obscure laymen, not onely of an inferior but sometimes also of a bad character [1]. But if those venerable Saints and Martyrs were not indued with them when living, they had amends made to them when dead, if we can believe the reports of their successors, by a profusion of them on their bones and reliques: which suggests a farther cause of suspecting the faith and judgment of those early ages. For how

[1] Νυνὶ δὲ καὶ δι' ἀναξίτων ἐνεργεῖν ὁ Θεὸς εἴωθε. Chrysof. T. iii. p. 66. c. Edit. Benedict.

Adjicient præterea multa de auctoritate cujusque Doctoris Hæretici; illos maxime doctrinæ suæ fidem confirmasse, mortuos suscitasse, debiles reformasse, futura significasse, ut merito Apostoli

crederentur. Tertull. De præscript. Hæreticor. § 44.

Εκείνο δὲ προσέθιμεν τῷ λόγῳ, ὅτε ἔτε πᾶς ὁ προφητεύων, ὅσιν. ἔτε πᾶς ὁ δαίμονας ἐλαύνων. Constitut. Apostol. l. viii. c. 2.

Ut intelligamus, quædam miracula etiam sceleratos homines facere, qualia sancti facere non possunt. August. Oper. T. vi. p. 71.

can we think it credible, that God should withhold his distinguishing favors from his faithful servants when living, to bestow them on their rotten bones? or employ his extraordinary power to no other use, but to perpetuate a manifest imposture in his Church? since it is to those ancient tales, so gravely attested, of miracles wrought *by the bones of Saints and Martyrs*, that the Church of *Rome* owes all that trade, which she still draws, from the same fund and treasure of her wonder-working reliques: and if we can believe such stories, as they are delivered to us by the Primitive writers, we cannot condemn a practice, which is evidently grounded upon them.

These things, I say, are so strange, as to give just reason to suspect, that there was some original fraud in the case; and that those strolling wonder-workers, by a dexterity of juggling, which art, not Heaven, had taught them, imposed upon the credulity of the pious Fathers, whose strong prejudices and ardent zeal for the interest of Christianity, would dispose them to embrace, without examination, whatever seemed to promote so good a cause. That this was really the case in some instances, is certain and notorious: and that it was so in all, will appear still more probable, when we have considered, in the next place, the particular characters of the several Fathers, on whose testimony the credit of those wonderful narratives depends.

III. The authority of a writer, who affirms any questionable fact, must depend on the character of his veracity and of his judgement. As far as we are assured of the one, so far are we assured, that he does not willingly deceive us; and from our good opinion of the other, we persuade ourselves, that he was not deceived himself: but in proportion as there is reason to doubt of either, there will always be reason to doubt, of the truth of what he delivers. Nay, in many cases, the want of judgement alone has all the same effect, as the want of veracity too, towards invalidating the testimony of a witness: especially in cases of an extraordinary, or miraculous nature; where the weakness of men is the most liable to be imposed upon; and the more so, as it happens to be joined to the greater piety and simplicity of manners. Since this then is the sole rule of determining the measure of credit, which is due to a witness of any strange and questionable facts, I shall apply it to the case before us; and examine what proofs of a sound judgement and strict veracity are to be found in the writings of those Fathers, who attest the miraculous stories which we are now considering.

As to the Apostolic Fathers, of whom I have spoken above, since they have contributed but little towards the illustration of the present question, and bear no direct testimony in it; or none at least, but what confirms the point which

I am

I am defending; there is no reason to enter into the consideration of their particular characters. Their works, as I have said, are translated into *English*, so that every one may judge of them for himself. They appear to have been men of great piety, integrity, and simplicity: and that is all, I think, which we need to declare of them on this occasion.

Justin Martyr comes next, whose genius will best be illustrated by some specimens of it, extracted from his writings. We have seen above, that among the indowments conferred in an extraordinary manner on the Primitive Christians, the gift of expounding the holy Scriptures, or the mysteries of God, was reckoned one: and this, as *Justin* frequently affirms, was granted by the special grace of God to himself [1]. Let us inquire then, what use he made of this divine gift: and if ever he was really enlightened by it, we might surely expect to find the effects of it there, where he is discoursing on the mystery of the Cross; which he declares to be the greatest symbol of power and dominion, and explains in the following manner: “ Consider, says he, all the
 “ things in the world, whether they could be
 “ administered, or have any communication
 “ with each other, without this form of the
 “ Cross. The Sea could not be passed, unless
 “ that trophy called the sail were preserved in

[1] Απικάλωθεν ἔτι ἡμῶν πάν-
 τα ὅσα κ' ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν διὰ
 τῆς χάριτος αὐτῆς νοσησαμεν.
 Dial. par. ii. p. 35.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναμαι ἐμοὶ τοιαύ-
 τη τις εἶναι, ἀλλὰ χάρις παρὰ
 θεοῦ μόνη εἰς τὸ νοσησαι τὰς γρα-
 φὰς αὐτῆς ἰδίῳ μοι. Ib. p. 258.
 K 3 “ the

“ the ship : the earth could not be tilled without
 “ it : for neither diggers nor artificers could do
 “ their work, but by instruments of this shape.
 “ The form of man differs in nothing else from
 “ other animals, but in the erection of his body,
 “ and the extension of his arms, and the pro-
 “ jection of his nose from the forehead, through
 “ which respiration is made, and which shews
 “ nothing else but the figure of the cross : in
 “ which sense also it is spoken of by the Pro-
 “ phet; *Christ the Lord is the breath before our*
 “ *face* [1].” Upon this passage the very pious
 and learned Dr. *Grabe* makes the following re-
 marks, which I would recommend to all the
 zealous admirers of these *venerable Saints* and
purest ages; “ *that the holy Martyr must not be*
 “ *rashly blamed, for an interpretation so forced and*
 “ *far-fetched; because it was the prevailing custom*
 “ *of that age, to import into the sacred text senses,*
 “ *which did not belong to it* [2].”

Again; “ Hear, says *Justin*, how Christ, af-
 “ ter he was crucified, fulfilled the symbol of
 “ the tree of life in Paradise, and of all the other
 “ things, which were to happen afterwards to
 “ the righteous. For *Moses* was sent with a

[1] Κατανοήσατε γὰρ πάντα
 τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, εἰ ἄνευ τῆς σχη-
 μάτος τούτου διακρίνεται, ἢ κοινῶ-
 ναν ἔχον διακρίναι, &c. Apol. i.
 p. 82.

[2] Alium autem sensum
 tradit hoc loco *Justinus*, qui
 nimis longe quidem petitus

videtur: nec tamen S. Mar-
 tyr idcirco temere reprehendendus, quod mos istius ævi
 tam inter Judæos, quam Chri-
 stianos obtinuerit, sacro tex-
 tai haud innatos sensus sub-
 inferre. Vid. not. (29) ad Ju-
 stin. ibid.

“rod, to redeem his people: with this rod he
 “divided the sea; brought water out of the
 “rock; and with a piece of wood, made the
 “bitter water sweet. *Jacob* also with sticks,
 “made his uncle *Laban’s* sheep bring forth such
 “lambs, as were to be his own again,” &c [1].
 And so he goes on, in this way of allusion, to
 apply all the sticks and pieces of wood in the
 Old Testament to the Cross of Christ: and
 pursuing the same argument in another place,
 where he is describing the fight of the *Israelites*
 with *Amalek*, he says, “that when the son of
 “*Nun*, called *Jesus*, led the people on to battel,
 “*Moses* employed himself in prayer, with his
 “hands stretched out in the form of a Cross;
 “that as long as he continued in that posture,
 “*Amalek* was beaten; but when he remitted
 “any thing of it, his own people suffered; and
 “that all this was owing to the power of the
 “Cross: for the people did not conquer, be-
 “cause *Moses* prayed, but because, while the
 “name of *Jesus* was at the head of the battel,
 “*Moses* was exhibiting the figure of the
 “Cross [2].” It would be endless to run thro’
 all the interpretations of the same kind, which
 are to be found in this Father; since his works

[1] “Οτι δὲ, μετὰ τὸ γαυρο-
 θῆαι τῶτον — σύμβολον εἶχε
 τὸ ξύλον τῆς σαῆς, ὃ ἐν τῷ σα-
 ραβείτῳ περιβιβουδαίηλε κληί, κῆ
 τῶν γενησομένων πᾶσι τοῖς ἐι-
 κασίαι; ἀπέρασε, &c. Id. Dial.

par. ii. p. 325, 326.

[2] Οὐ γάρ ὄντι, ἕτως ἡ ἁγία
 Μαρτίαι, διὰ τῶτον κρείσσων ὁ λαὸς
 ἰσχυρῶς, ἀλλ’ ὅτι — αὐτὸς τὸ
 σημεῖον τῷ γαυρῷ ἐπέσει. Ibid.
 p. 336.

are but little else than a wretched collection of them: the pure flights of an enthusiastic fancy and heated brain, which no man in his sober senses could mistake for divine revelations. Yet as absurd as they now appear to be, this pious Father insists, that they were all suggested to him from Heaven; and appeals to the *Jews* themselves, against whom he was applying them, *whether they thought it possible for him, to acquire so perfect a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, if he had not received from the author of them, the grace or gift to understand them* [1]. What credit then can be due to this Father, in the report of other people's gifts and inspirations, who was so grossly deceived himself, or willing at least to deceive others, in this confident attestation of his own? Dr. *Cave* tells us, that *Justin* was wholly ignorant of the Hebrew tongue; which was the cause of his childish blunders, whenever he meddled with it. "Every one, says he, who has dipped but ever so little into that tongue, knows, that *Satan* in the Hebrew signifies an adversary: but see the ridiculous interpretation of *Justin*: He is called *Satanas*, says the Martyr; a name compounded agreeably to his nature, of *Sata*, which signifies an Apostate, and *Nas*, a Serpent," &c [2]. But for a farther illustra-

[1] Ομοίως ἀν' ἡμῶν πάλι, ὡς αἰδοίτες, μενομήνας διηκθῆναι ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ταῦτα, εἰ μὴ θεολόγῳ τῷ θεολόγῳ αὐτὰ ἐλάθωμεν χάριν τῷ νόθῳ. Dial. par. ii. p. 390.

[2] Litterarum Hebraica-

rum rudem penitus & imperitum fuisse, *Justin*o vitio verti non debet, &c.—Hinc factum est, ut in Hebraeis adeo pueriliter lapsus sit. Exemplum dabo, &c. *Cave* Hist. Litter. p. 61. Edit. ult.

tion of his character, I shall give an instance or two of the doctrines which he teaches, as orthodox and apostolical, as well as of the facts, which he asserts, as certain and unquestionable.

He declares, that all the Christians, who were in all points orthodox, embraced and believed the doctrine of the *millennium*: “that all the
“ Saints should be raised in the flesh, and reign
“ with *Christ* in *Jerusalem*, enlarged and beauti-
“ fied in a wonderful manner for their recep-
“ tion, in the enjoyment of all sensual pleasures,
“ for a thousand years before the general resur-
“ rection [1].” Which doctrine he deduces from the testimony of the Prophets and of *St. John* the Apostle; and was followed in it by the Fathers of the second and third centuries: yet the doctrine itself was afterwards exploded, as it well deserved, not onely as absurd and monstrous, but as impious and heretical. *St. Jerom* treats it as a mere fable, or *dream of the Jews, and Judaizing Christians*. Yet from the authority of those Fathers, who asserted it, and the credit which it had obtained with the generality of Christians, he foresaw, as he tells us, *what a furious storm he should raise against himself by that freedom* [2]. The sure fate of all those, who, in

[1] Εργά δὲ καὶ εἰ τινὲς εἰσιν ὁμοθυμαδὸν καὶ πάντα Χριστιανῶν, καὶ σαρκὸς ἀνάστασις γνησθεῖσαι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, καὶ χίλια ἔτη ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, οἰκοδομηθεῖσθαι, καὶ κοσμηθεῖσθαι, καὶ πλεονεξήσθαι, &c. Dial. par. ii. p. 313.

[2] Quæ qui recipiant, mille quoque annorum fabulam & terrenum Salvatoris imperium Judaico errore suscipient.—Comment. in Isa. c. xxx. Oper. Tom. III. p. 262. Edit. Benedict.

any age of the Church, from the earliest times down to the present, have had the virtue and courage to attack any popular error, or reigning superstition.

He asserts another doctrine full as monstrous ;
 “ that God having created the world, commit-
 “ ted the care of it to Angels ; who transgres-
 “ sing their duty, fell in love with women, and
 “ begot children on them, whom we call Dæ-
 “ mons ; who subdued mankind to their pow-
 “ er ; partly by magical writings ; partly by
 “ terrors, and punishments ; and partly by the
 “ institution of sacrifices, fumes, and libations ;
 “ of which they began presently to stand in need,
 “ after they had enslaved themselves to their
 “ lusts and passions, &c. [1].” And in another
 place, “ the truth, says he, shall come out ; that
 “ evil Dæmons of old debauched women and
 “ corrupted boys, and spread terrors among
 “ men ; who did not examine things by reason ;
 “ but seized with fear, and not knowing, that
 “ these Dæmons were evil spirits, called them
 “ Gods, and gave every one that name, which
 “ they had each taken to themselves. But when
 “ *Socrates* by true reason endeavoured to expose

Ex quo discimus mille an-
 norum fabulam, in qua rur-
 sum nuptiæ promittuntur, &
 cibi & terrene vite conver-
 satio, adjiciendam Ibid.
 p. 436.

Ut præfaga mente jam
 cernam, quantorum in me

rabies concitanda sit. Ibid.
 p. 478.

[1] Οἱ δὲ ἄγγελοι, παρκα-
 εῶτες τῆς ἀπὸ τῆς τάξης, γυναικῶν
 μιξοῦν ἠτήθησαν, καὶ παῖδας
 ἐτεκνωσαν, οἳ εἰσὶν οἱ λεγόμενοι
 δαίμονες, &c. Apol. ii. p. 112.

“ their

“ their practices, and draw men away from their
 “ worship, they, by the help of wicked men,
 “ took care to get him put to death, as an
 “ Atheist and impious person [1].”

He professes likewise the highest regard for certain spurious books, which were published under the names of the *Sibyl* and *Hystaspis*; which he treats with the same reverence as the Prophetic Scriptures; appeals to them as divine, and says, that “ *by the contrivance of Demons, it was made a capital crime to read them,* in order to deter men from coming at the knowledge of what was good, and keep them still in subjection to themselves: which yet, adds he, they were not able to effect: for we not onely read them freely without fear, but offer them also, as you see, to your perusal; knowing, that they will be found acceptable to all [2].” And it is certain, that from this example and authority of *Justin*, these silly writings were held in the highest veneration by the Fathers and rulers of the Church, through all succeeding ages.

Clemens of Alexandria supposes them to have been inspired by God, in the same manner as the

[1] Εἰρήσειαι γὰρ τ' ἀληθῆς.
 ἐπεὶ τὸ πάλαιον δαίμονες φαῦλοι
 ἐπιφανείας ποιήσαντες, καὶ γυ-
 ναίκας ἐμύθησαν καὶ παιδας
 διέφθεραν, &c. Ib. Apol. i.
 p. 10.

[2] Καὶ Σίβυλλα δὲ καὶ Ὑστα-
 σπῆς, γὰρ σέθεν εἰς φρασίῳ

ἀνάλωσιν διὰ πονηρῶν ἔφασαν.
 Apol. i. p. 30.

Καὶ ἐπέγειαν δὲ τῶν φαύλων
 δαίμονων, δάνατον ἀρίστη καὶ
 τῶν τὰς Ὑστάσπης, ἢ Σίβυλλης, ἢ
 τῶν περὶ τῶν βιβλῶν ἀγαπητω-
 κέων, &c. Ib. p. 67.

Prophets of the Old Testament : which he confirms by the authority both of *St. Peter* and of *St. Paul*, whom he cites as appealing to them, for a prediction of the life and character of *Jesus*. “ For as God, says *Clemens*, out of his desire to save the *Jews*, gave them Prophets, so raising up Prophets also to the *Greeks*, from their own nation and language, as far as they were capable of receiving that good gift of God, he separated them from the vulgar, as not onely the Preaching of *Peter*, but the Apostle *Paul* also declares, speaking thus ; *Take the Greek books into your hands, and look into the Sibyl, how clearly she speaks of one God, and of the things to come : then take Hyftaspes also and read, and you will find the Son of God much more clearly and evidently described : and that many Kings shall employ all their forces against Christ, out of their hatred to him, and to all who bear his name* [1].”

[1] Clem. Alex. Strom. l. vi. p. 761. Edit. Ox. The *Preaching of Peter*, Κήρυγμα Πέτρου, was the title of a spurious book, ascribed to that Apostle : which is often cited as genuin by *Clemens*, *Origen*, and the other Fathers, and was forged probably in the age immediately succeeding to that of the Apostles. [Vid. Cave Hist. Litt. vol. i. p. 6. it. Grab. Spicil. Patr. T. i.

p. 62.] The passage also cited here from *St. Paul*, was taken from some other spurious piece now unknown, which then passed for the work of that Apostle. [Vid. Not. ad loc. Clem.] *Hyftaspes* is called by *Lactantius*, a most ancient King of the *Medes* : [l. vii. c. 16.] and by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, the *Father of Darius* : and is said to have been a master of all

The

The heathens, on the other hand, charged the Christians with the forgery of these books, and gave the title of *Sibyllists*, by way of contempt, to those, who held them to be divine [1]. Which charge the Fathers constantly denied and treated as a pure calumny [2]: Yet all the Critics of these days allow the fact to be true, and consider it, as one of the pious frauds of

the doctrine of the *Magi*, Vid. Amm. Marc. l. xxiii. c. vi. & Not. Valef.

[1] *Origen*, speaking of *Celsus* says; *επιπε δε τινος ειναι η Σιβαλλιστις*, etc. Cont. Cels. l. v. 272.

[2] *Celsus* having charged the Christians with inserting many blasphemous passages into the verses of the *Sibyl*, *Origen* observes in answer to him, that he had neither produced any passages, so inserted, nor any antient and corrected copies of the verses themselves, which wanted such passages; which he ought to have done, if he had been able. [l. vii. 369.] This indeed was, to put the controversy upon a right foot; by which, however, as the learned *Valefius* remarks, *Celsus* might easily have made good his charge, and detected the forgery. [Not. in Euseb. Vit. Constant. p. 700. Edit. Cant.] If he did not therefore produce any old

copies, which wanted the passages in question, the reason of it must be, that he either thought it unnecessary, in a case so manifest, or that the books themselves were not easy to be found.

The succeeding Fathers treat the same objection in a manner wholly equivocal and evasive. *Lactantius*, after he has alledged many verses from the *Sibyl*, in which the principal acts and miracles of *Jesus* are circumstantially described, says; “ those, who are confuted by “ these testimonies, usually “ fly to this shift, of declar- “ ing these verses, not to be “ the *Sibyls*, but forged and “ composed by our people: “ which no man will believe, “ who has read *Cicero* and “ *Varro*, and the rest of the “ antient writers, who make “ mention of the *Erythraean* “ and the other *Sibyls*, and “ who were all dead before “ those

those primitive ages. *There is no man, says Dr. Cave, who does not see, that they were forged for*

“Christ was born.” [De from the *Sibyl* by *Lactantius*, Ver. Sap. l. iv. 15.] The will serve as a specimen of four following verses, cited the rest.

Εἰν ἄλλοις ἅμα πέντε κ' ἰχθυέσσιν δυοῖσιν
 Ἄνδρῶν χιλιάδα. ἐν ἐρήμῳ πέντε κρεῖσσει.
 Καὶ τὰ περιστεύνια λαῶν μείλι κλασματά πάντια,
 Δώδεκα πληρώσει κοφίνες εἰς ἐλπίδα πολλῶν.

With five loaves and two fishes

He will satisfy five thousand men in the desert.

'Then gathering up the fragments, which remain,

He will fill twelve baskets for the confirmation of many.

Eusebius has preserved an *Acrostick* said to have been taken from the *Erythraean Sibyl*; in which the initial letters of each line compose the following greek words, *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ, Σταυρός. Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, Cross.* He tells us however, “that many people, though they allowed the *Erythraean Sibyl* to have been a *Prophetess*, yet rejected this *Acrostick*, suspecting it to have been forged by the Christians—but the truth, adds he, is manifest: and our people have been so exact in computing the times, as to leave no room to imagine, that the verses were made after the coming of

“Christ, and falsely sent abroad, as the predictions of the *Sibyl*. For it is agreed by all, that *Cicero* had read this poem, which he translated into the latin tongue, and inserted into his own works.” [Vid. Constant. p. 700. Ed. Cant.] Now the sole ground of this confident assertion is, that *Cicero* speaking of certain verses, ascribed to the *Sibyl*, which had really been forged by the partisans of *J. Cesar*, to serve a political design, after he has ridiculed the verses themselves, and the purpose of them, intimates, that they were composed in the form of an *Acrostick*, which was a work of labor and attention, not of madness

the advancement of the Christian faith [1]. Some impute the Fraud to *Hermas*; some to *Papias*; and others to *Justin* himself. Mr. *Blondel* and Mr. *Dodwell* charge it upon the Heretics, called

or ecstacy, and could not therefore come from the Sibyl. Div. ii. 54.

St. *Austin* has given us a latin translation of the same *Acrostick*, which he introduces thus; “The *Erythraean Sibyl* has indeed written some things clearly and manfully relating to Christ; which I have read in the latin tongue, tho’ in bad verses, thro’ the unskilfulness of the translator, as I afterwards understood. For *Flaccianus*, an eminent person, who had been Proconsul; a man of flowing eloquence and great learning; as we were conversing together on the subject of Christ, produced a greek book, being the verses, he said, of the *Erythraean Sibyl*, where he shewed in a certain place, how the initial letters of each verse were manag’d so, as to form the words, *Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός,* &c.” [De Civ. Dei, xviii. 23.] But the same Father declares in another place, that *there were some, who suspected all these prophecies,*

which related to Christ, and passed under the name of the Sibyl, to have been forged by the Christians [ib. c. xlvi.] Upon which the learned Editor of his works, *Ludovicus Vives*, remarks, *that they could not be forged, because they are cited both by Lactantius and Eusebius.* [Not. in loc.] Thus a most gross and palpable forgery was imposed upon the Christian world, from the very midst of those best and purest ages; which tho’ rejected and derided from the beginning by all men of sense among the Heathens, yet obtained full credit in the Church, thro’ all ages, without any other ground to support it, but the utility of the deceit, and the authority of those venerable Fathers, who contrived and attested it.

[1] *Hadriano Imperante, forsan circa ann. 136. nati videntur.*—*Conficta esse, idque in gratiam Christiane fidei nemo non videt.* Cave Hist. Litt. Vol. i. p. 57. Edit. Oxon.

Montanists; but by a gross mistake, as Dr. *Cave* observes, since *Montanus* was not in being, till forty years after the *Sibylline books* were known to the world [1].

Justin affirms also that silly story, concerning the *Septuagint version* of the Old Testament. “That it was made by seventy Elders sent for that purpose from *Jerusalem* to *Ægypt*, at the request of King *Ptolemy*: whom that King shut up in as many separate cells, and obliged them, each to translate the whole Bible apart, and without any communication with each other: yet all their several translations were found to agree verbatim from the beginning to the end; and by that means were demonstrated to be of divine inspiration.” And to raise the greater attention to his story, he introduces it, by declaring, “that he is not telling us a fable or forged tale; but that he himself had seen at *Alexandria* the remains of those very cells, in which the Translators had been shut up [2].” But repeating the same story in his *Apology*, he makes an unhappy Blunder, by saying, that *King Ptolomy’s message to beg the assistance of those seventy translators, was sent to Herod, King of Jerusalem*; whereas *Herod* happened to live about three hundred years later

[1] Vid. *Cave* ib. p. 58. it. *Dodwell*. *Dissertation*. *Cyprian*. 4. § x.

[2] Ταῦτα ἔ μὴδὲ ὑμῶν, ὡς ἀλλοῖς Ἕλλησι, εἰδὲ σκεπασμέ-

ιας ἱστορίας ἀπαγγέλλομεν. ἀλλ’ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀλεξάνδρεια χυόμενοι, καὶ τὰ ἴχνη τῶν οἰκίσκων ἐν τῇ Γαζῶ ἰωρακότες ἐτι σωζόμενα, &c. *Cohort. ad Græc.* p. 14.

than *Ptolemy* [1]. Dr. *Grabe* endeavours to excuse *Justin* by the help of a forced criticism, which the ingenious Editor of *Justin's* Apology, with good reason derides; since this pious Father was certainly guilty here of that weakness, against which St. *Paul* warned both *Timothy* and *Titus*, of giving too much heed to profane, Jewish, and old woman's fables [2]; and furnishes a pregnant instance, how easily his prejudices might impose upon him in all other cases of the like nature.

To these specimens of his want of judgment, I might add several more, from his frequent use of *fabulous* and *apochryphal* books, forged by the first Christians, under the names of the Apostles; and likewise from his false and negligent manner of quoting the genuine scriptures. Dr. *Grabe* has collected several instances of the first sort [3]; and his learned Editor finds frequent occasion to animadvert upon the second [4].

It will be said, perhaps, that these instances shew indeed a weakness of judgment, yet do not impeach the veracity of *Justin*, as a witness of fact. With regard to which, we must call to

[1] Ὅτε δὲ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Αἰγυπτίων βασιλεὺς — προσέπιψε τῷ τῶν Ἰουδαίων τότε βασιλ. ο. δ. Ἡρώδῃ &c. Apol. i. p. 49. vid. Not. 8, 9.

[2] 1 Tim. iv. 7. Tit. i. 14. See Ant. Van Dale Dissert. de Arist. p. 146.

[3] Vid. Grabe Spicileg.

Patr. Tom. i. p. 14. 327. it. p. 19.

[4] Vid. Just. Apol. i. p. 87. quæ disputat. de feris venenosis &c. in deserto. it. p. 92. Not. 6. it. p. 206. Not. 20. it. p. 203. Not. 16. it. Not. 18 p. 327.

mind, what is hinted above, that the want of judgment alone may, in some cases, disqualify a man as effectually, from being a good witness, as if he wanted veracity too. For example, *Justin* expressly affirms, *that he had seen the cells, in which the seventy were shut up to the task of translating the Bible.* Now it is certain, that there never were any such cells, nor any such translators: and the best excuse, which can be made for him is, that he was imposed upon by some *Jews* or *Christians* of *Alexandria*, who might shew him some old ruins, under the name of *Cells*, which his prepossession in favor of the story, owing to his natural credulity and want of judgement, made him take to be really such.

Again, in his *Apology*, addressed to the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, he charges them with paying divine honors to the Heretic and Impostor *Simon*, of *Samaria*, commonly called the *Magician*: and for the truth of his charge, appeals to a Statue, then subsisting in *Rome*, and publicly dedicated to that *Simon* in the island of the *Tiber*, with this Inscription, SIMONI DEO SANCTO [1]. But it is manifest beyond all reasonable doubt, as some learned

[1] Ἦς ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος — θεός ἐνομιθεῖν καὶ ἀνδριάνη παρ' ὑμῶν ὡς θεός τετίμηται. ὁ δὲ ἀνδρίας ἀνεγήγερται ἐν τῷ Τίβερι πειλαμῶ, μίλιαξὺ τῶν δύο γεφυρῶν, ἔχων ἐπιγραφήν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ταύτην, Σίμωνι Δεῶ Σάτω.

Apol. i. p. 39.

Justin was followed in the belief and assertion of this fact by all the succeeding Fathers. *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Augustinus*, *Epiphanius*, *Eusebius*.

men have shewn, that *Justin* was led here into a gross blunder, by his usual want of judgment and knowledge of *Roman* affairs, and his pre-conceived belief of certain fabulous stories, which passed current about this *Simon* among the first Christians [1]; for the Statue and Inscription, to which he appeals, were not dedicated to his Countryman, *Simon Magus*, of whose Deification there is not the least hint in any *Roman* writer, but to a *Sabine Deity*, of ancient worship in *Rome*, and of similar name, SEMONI SANCO [2], frequently mentioned by the old Writers: as the inscription itself, dug up, about two centuries ago, from the ruins of that very place, or little island, which *Justin* describes, has clearly demonstrated [3].

Now should we allow these cases, to be clear of any fraud or design to deceive; yet they yield so bad a sample of his understanding, as

[1] Vid. Ant. Van Dale de Statua Simoni Mago erecta, Dissertat.

[2] *Sancus*, as *Dionysius* writes, was a Deity of the old Sabines, whom some called Διζ θεοι. [Vid. Dionys. Hal. Antiq. i. ii. 49. it. iv. 58.] and the Romans *Deum Fidium*. And *Semones* signified the same as Ημθεοι, Demigods or Heroes deified. *Livy* mentions a Chapel of *Semo Sancus* in *Rome* — to whom the goods of certain

enemies were consecrated — bona Semoni Sanco confuerunt consecranda positi — in Sacello Sanci versus adent Quirini. Liv. viii. 20.

[3] SEMONI
SANCO
DEO FIDIO
SACRVM.
&c.

Gruter. Vol. i. p. xcvi. 5. where there are several more Inscriptions to the same Deity.

to render his testimony of very little weight in any other relation whatsoever. For if he was deceived in such plain and obvious facts, where a common discernment and moderate knowledge of history, would have enabled him to have discovered the truth, how much the more easily would he be caught by a confederacy of subtle and crafty Impostors, employing all their arts to amaze and dazzle the senses of the credulous, and to put off their surprizing tricks, for the miraculous effects of a divine power?

I cannot dismiss this Father, without taking notice of an accusation, which he frequently brings against the Jews, *that they had expunged many passages out of the Greek Bibles, in which the character and sufferings of Jesus were clearly described*: which charge all the learned of these later ages have found to be wholly groundless. Let us see then how he supports it. “They have erased, says he, out of the book of *Esdras*, the following words; *Esdras* said to the people, this passover is our Saviour, and our refuge; and if you will but persuade yourselves, and be convinced in your hearts, that we are to humble him in a sign or figure, and afterwards to put our trust in him; this place shall not be made desolate to all ages, says the Lord of Hosts. But if you do not believe on him, nor attend to his preaching, you shall be as dirt to the nations [1].” The

[1] Από μὲν ἑνὶ τῶν ἐξηγητῶν γινώσκων ταυτην ἀφαιροῦν, &c.
 ὡς ἐξηγήσατο Ἐσδρας εἰς τὸν νο.
 μὸν τὸν σιγῆ τῶ πάρα. τὴν ἐξήγ.
 Dial. 292.

Editor of *Justin* remarks here, that this passage is not to be found, in any copies either of the *Apocryphal* or *Canonical Esdras*; nor in any other Christian writer, but *Lactantius*: and instead of being expunged by the *Jews*, appears to have been forged by the *Christians*: where he refers us to the censure of an able Critic and Protestant Divine, *John Croius*; who charges the forgery on *Justin* himself, in the following words; “ To propose what I think, freely and candidly; and what all honest and religious judges of these matters will allow to be true: “ I take this to have been a pious fraud of “ *Justin*, in which *Lactantius* followed him: “ who forged and published this passage, for “ the confirmation of the Christian Doctrine, “ as well as the greatest part of the *Sibylline Oracles*, and the Sentences of *Mercurius* [1].

Again, *Justin* affirms, that in the xcth Psalm it was said, *tell the nations that the Lord reigned from the tree*: and that the *Jews* had erased the words, *from the tree*. But as there is no footstep of these words, either in the Vulgate, or any of the *Greek* or *Hebrew* copies, it is manifest, says the Editor, that *they were not expunged by the Jews, but added by the Christians* [2]. Last-

[1] Sed satis patet ab aliquo Christiano conficta esse, non a Judæis deleta. — Quod autem *Joannes Croius*, Observat. in N. T. p. 205. *Justinum* hujus fraudis artificem

fuisse affirmat, in eo sane non Martyris nostri, in quem ista suspicio non cadit, sed suam potius ipsius existimationem laedit, &c. Vid. Not. ad loc.

[2] Manifestissimum tamen

ly, he charges them *with expunging a passage of Jeremiah*, which yet he owns to be retained in some copies of their synagogues; as it actually is in all copies, both *Greek and Hebrew*, to this day. Upon which the Editor says, *that he absolves the Jews again from all fraud, but cannot absolve Justin from the utmost negligence and rashness* [1]. So unlucky and injudicious was this Father, in his charge of these frauds on the *Jews*, as to give an occasion only for fixing them, after all, upon the *Christians*, and, in the opinion of some, even upon himself.

The learned and ingenious Editor of his *Apolo- gies and Dialogues*, who shews an inclination, to defend him on all occasions, where he is defensible, and on some, even where he is not, yet is often forced to break out into a kind of astonishment, at his ignorance, negligence, rashness, credulity, so gross in many instances, as to baffle all the art of criticism, nor to admit any certain rule, of collecting his real sense. Yet *there are some still*, says he, *who extol him, not onely as a most learned, but a most eloquent writer* [2].

est, hæc verba — non fuisse a Judæis resecta, sed ab aliquo Christiano addita, &c. Not. ad Dial. p. 294.

[1] Καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν διὰ Ἰερ- μίᾳ λεχθέντων ταῦτα περιέκοψαν. Ib. 293.

Nos quoque Judæos fraudis absolvimus, *Justinum* summæ negligentiae & temerita-

tis absolvere non possumus. Not. ad loc.

[2] Vid. Edit. Lond. 1722. & Clarissimi Thirlbii Annotat. ad p. 130, 206, 293, 378, &c. Et tamen sunt, qui hunc non tantum doctissimum, verum etiam eloquentissimum esse prædicant. p. 305.

Irenæus, whose character and doctrines come next to be considered, was, of all the Fathers, whose works still remain to us, the most diligent collector and assertor of *Apostolic traditions*. And in truth, as far as his judgment and veracity may be relied upon, he seems to have been well qualified for that character; being acquainted, as he tells us, with several, who had conversed familiarly with the Apostles, and curious also to inform himself, of all the particular doctrines, which they had ever taught by word of mouth. “He lived, says Mr. *Dodwell*, “so near to the times of the Apostles, as to be “able, to transmit their doctrines to posterity “with certainty and fidelity, as they were delivered to him by oral tradition, from their immediate Successors and Disciples [1].” Yet *Photius*, one of the ablest Critics of his own, or any other age of the Church, has intimated a different character of him in the following short censure upon his writings; in which, *he thought it necessary*, he says, *to advertise the reader, that in some of them, the purity of truth, with respect to Ecclesiastical doctrines, is adulterated by his false and spurious reasonings* [2]. But the following instances of the doctrines which he delivers, as orthodox and *Apostolic*, will be the surest rule of

[1] Sufficit enim, ut Apostolorum tempora ita prope contigerit, ut quid senserint Apostoli, posset orali traditione ad posteros deducere,

traditionisque illius certus & fidelis esse testis. Diff. Iren. § 3.

[2] Phot. Bibl. c. cxx.

determining his real character, as well as the proper degree of credit, which may be due to his testimony.

He affirms then, *that our Saviour lived to an old age, or was fifty years old at the least*, at the time of his crucifixion; which he attempts to prove, first, from the reason of the thing; “that as
“Christ came to save all men, of all ranks and
“degrees, so it was necessary, that he should
“pass through all the several stages of life, that
“he might be a pattern to them all: 2dly, from
“the unanimous tradition and positive testi-
“mony of all the old men, who had lived with
“St. John, and the other Apostles, from whom,
“he says, they all received this account, and
“constantly bore witness to the truth of it [1].”
Yet *this unanimous tradition*, so solemnly vouched by this venerable Father, is as certainly false, as the Gospels are true. Dr. *Whitby*, after he has produced this same passage, cries out, as it were, with astonishment, “Behold here, according to

[1] Sic & Senior in Senioribus, ut sit perfectus Magister in omnibus, non solum secundum expositionem veritatis, sed & secundum aetatem, sanctificans simul Seniores, exemplum ipsis quoque sicens — a quinquagesimo anno declinat jam in aetatem seniore[m]: quam habens Dominus noster docebat. Sicut Evangelium & omnes Seniores testantur, qui in Asia

apud Joannem discipulum Domini convenerunt, id ipsum tradidisse eis Joannem. Permanfit autem cum eis usque ad Trajani tempora. Quidam autem eorum non solum Joannem, sed & alios Apostolos viderunt, & hæc eadem de ipsis audierunt: & testantur de hujusmodi relatione. Iren. l. ii. c. 39. Edit. Oxon.

“ *Irenæus,*

“ *Irenæus*, how all the Elders of *Asia* testify with
 “ one voice, that they had received from St.
 “ *John* and the other Apostles, a tradition, con-
 “ cerning a fact manifestly false! behold an
 “ *Apostolic* man, professing to prove from St.
 “ *John’s Gospel*, things not only contradictory to
 “ that Gospel, but to the Articles of our
 “ Creed [1]! &c.” The learned *Cave* also, in
 “ his Life of *Irenæus*, tells us, “ that he was be-
 “ trayed into this error,—partly from a mis-
 “ taken report, which he had somewhere picked
 “ up (and it may be from his master *Papias*) and
 “ partly out of opposition to his adversaries,
 “ who maintained, that our Saviour staid no
 “ longer upon earth, than till the thirty-first
 “ year of his age; against whom the eagerness
 “ of disputation tempted him to make good his
 “ assertion from any plausible pretence [2].” &c.

He asserts likewise the doctrine of the *Millen-
 nium*, in the grossest sense of it, from the same
 authority of a tradition, handed down to him
 by all the old men, who had conversed with St.
John, and heard him relate, *what our Saviour
 himself used to teach concerning it*: of which he
 has recorded the following passage; “ The days
 “ will come, in which there shall grow vine-
 “ yards, having each 10,000 vine stocks; and
 “ each stock, 10,000 branches; each branch,
 “ 10,000 shoots; each shoot, 10,000 bunches;
 “ each bunch, 10,000 grapes; and each grape

[1] Vid. Whitby Strict. Patr. in Joh. c. viii, lvii. p. 200.

[2] Life of Iren. § 10. p. 170.

“squeezed shall yield 25 measures of wine;
 “and when any of the Saints shall go to
 “pluck a bunch, another bunch will cry out, I
 “am a better, take me, and bless the Lord
 “through me. In like manner a grain of wheat
 “sown shall bear 10,000 stalks; each stalk
 “10,000 grains; and each grain 10,000 pounds
 “of the finest flower; and so all other fruits,
 “feeds, and herbs in the same proportion, &c.
 “These words, says he, *Papias*, a disciple of St.
 “*John*, and companion of *Polycarp*, an ancient
 “man, testifies in writing in his fourth book,
 “and adds, that they are credible to those who
 “believe [1].” The pious and cautious Dr.
Grabe remarks on this occasion, “that what
 “*Irenæus* says here about the stalks of grain,
 “will be thought an argument of straw by
 “those, to whom such things appear incredible:
 “but, that we ought not however, either to
 “deny or affirm any thing rashly [2].” But
 “*Eusebius* gives a frank and clear solution of

[1] Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Παπίας,
 Ἰωάννης μὲν ἀκουστής, Πολυκάρπῳ
 δὲ ἐταίρῳ γέγονας, ἀρχαίῳ
 αὐτῷ ἐγγράφῳ ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ.—Et
 adjecit, dicens, Hæc autem
 credibilia sunt credentibus,
 l. v. p. 455.

Irenæus then proceeds to confirm this doctrine, by the testimonies of the Prophets, *Isaiab*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and *the Revelations of St. John*: and contends, that it cannot

be interpreted Allegorically, but will be fulfilled according to the letter in an earthly Jerusalem.

[2] Hoc quod *Irenæus* pro ubertate & magnitudine fructuum ex *paleis* nescit argumentum, *Stramineum* fortasse vocaverint, quibus ista sunt incredibilia. Sed de hisce nihil temere negandum, uti nec affirmandum. Annot. ad loc. p. 455.

the

the matter, by informing us, that *Papias was a weak man, of a very shallow understanding, as it appeared from his writings, and by mistaking the meaning of the Apostles, imposed these silly traditions on Irenæus, and the greatest part of the Ecclesiastical writers, who reflecting on the age of the man, and his near approach to the Apostles, were drawn by him into the same opinions* [1].

Irenæus affirms also, on the same authority of tradition delivered to him by those, who had received it from the Apostles, that Enoch and Elias were translated into that very Paradise, from which Adam was expelled, to remain there, till the consummation of all things : and that it was the same place, into which St. Paul also was caught up [2]. This is affirmed likewise by all the later Fathers, both *Greek and Latin*; in-

[1] Σφόδρα γέλοιοι σμικροὶ ὡν τὸν ἴδιον, ὡς αἰ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶ λόγων τεκμηριώμενον ἐπιπέῃ φαίνεται. πλὴν καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν πλείστοις, ὅσοις τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν, τῆς ἑρμείας αὐτῶ δόξης, παραλίτθον γέγονε, τὴν ἀρχαίωτην αὐτῶν ἀνδρῶν παρεξηλήμεναι. ὥσπερ ἔν Βίβλῳ, καὶ εἰ τις ἄλλος τὰ ἕμοια φησὶν ἀναπέφθην. Euf. Hist. l. iii. 39.

N. B. *Eusebius* indeed, in another place, speaks of *Papias* in a very different strain, as of a person *singularly remarkable for his eloquence and knowledge of the Scriptures*. [l. iii. c. 36.] But this pas-

sage, as the learned *Valesius* informs us, is not found in any of the old copies, which he had consulted, nor in the ancient version of *Rufinus*. Whence he concludes, that it was inserted by some ignorant Scholiast, as being contradictory to what *Eusebius* had more explicitly delivered elsewhere of the same *Papias*. Vid. Not. Vales. ad loc.

[2] Διὸ καὶ λέγουσιν οἱ περισσοῦτεροι, τῶν ἀποστόλων μαθηταὶ, τῆς μελαμβείας ἐκείτη μεταθεῖναι, etc. l. v. p. 405.

duced to it, we may imagine, by the pretence of an Apostolical tradition: which yet from the absurdity of it, must necessarily be as false, as the rest abovementioned. *Feverdantius*, the learned Editor of *Irenæus*, remarks upon this place; that though *St. Austin* does not allow this opinion to be a point of faith, yet since *Irenæus* and all the *Primitive Fathers* declare it to have been the doctrine of the *Apostles*, he cannot think it safe to believe otherwise [1]. And we must needs own him to be in the right, if, according to the principles of the Church of *Rome*, we can think the positive testimony of *Irenæus*, or the concurrent authority of all the *Fathers*, of weight enough to bear down the common sense and reason of mankind.

He asserts likewise very strongly, the fabulous story of the *Septuagint version*, with all the particulars already recited, of its miraculous birth, and the separate cells, &c. To which he has added another, no less romantic; that the *sacred Scriptures* were utterly destroyed in the *Babylonish captivity*, but restored again, after seventy years, by *Esdra*s, inspired by God for that purpose [2]. And though in this also, he was followed by all the principal *Fathers* of the succeeding centuries, yet as *Dr. Prideaux*, and other learned men have remarked, there is no better foundation for it, than that fabulous relation, in

[1] Vid. *Ibid.* Not. 5. ἡραβῶνι—ἐπέκτισεν Ἐσδράς τῶν

[2] Ὅτι—ἡ τῆ—ἀλλήλων—ἡ ἐξέ, etc. l. iii. c. 25.

εἰς τὴν λαὸν διαφύλαξαι τὰς

the fourteenth chapter of the second apocryphal book of Eldras: a book, too absurd even for the Romanists themselves, to admit into their canon [1]: and notwithstanding the authority of *Irenæus*, and of all the other Fathers, who assert the same opinion, Mr. *Tillemont* declares it to be very dangerous to religion, and tending, extremely to weaken the authority of the Scriptures [2]. He intimates also more than once, his belief, of *Angels mixing with the daughters of men*: where his Editor takes notice, that all the early Fathers were drawn into the same error, by the authority of the *Apocryphal book of Enoch*, cited by St. *Jude* [3]. Yet as monstrous as this error was, it maintained its ground, as Dr. *Whitby* assures us, through the four first centuries; though St. *Chryostom* treats it, as *absurd and blasphemous, and*

[1] Prid. Connct. par. i. p. 260. Vid. Ant. Van Dale Dissert. de Aristeâ, p. 151.

[2] Mais l'autorité de ces Peres ne l'empêche pas d'alleguer diverses raisons contre une opinion, qu'on peut dire tres dangereuse à la religion, puisqu'elle affoiblit extrêmement l'autorité de l'Écriture. Memoir. Eccles. Tom. iii. p. 93.

[3] Cum Angeli transfgressores commixti fuissent eis. l. iv. c. lxx. p. 371. Not. ii and l. v. c. xxix.

Neque *Judas Apostolicus*, ad

cujus testimonium *Tertullianus* provocat, libros *Enochi* canonicos fecit, dum quandam ex iis prophetiam de adventu Domini ad judicium allegavit, etc. Grab. Spicil. Patr. vol. i. in Not. p. 344.

Hæc forte respexit S. *Judas* vers. 6. scribens, Ἀγγέλους ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον etc.—Similiter ante ipsum S. *Petrus* in posteriori epistola, c. ii. § 4. cujus obscura quodammodo verba ex his *Enochi* verbis bene explicantur. Ibid. p. 351.

all, who espoused it, as mad; and Theodoret calls them infatuated and very stupid [1].

From some of the doctrines abovementioned, and particularly that of the *Millennium*, Mr. *Chillingworth* has proved against the *Romanists*, that the *Catholic Church*, even in the earliest ages, and within thirty or forty years after the *Apostles*, was not infallible in matters of faith: since all those absurdities were taught by the Fathers of those ages, not as their private opinions onely, but as doctrines of the Universal Church, derived immediately from the *Apostles*, and held so necessary, that those, who held the contrary, were hardly considered, as real Christians: to which he adds the following remark; that if *Papias*, who first committed them to writing, could either by his own error, or a desire to deceive, cozen the Fathers of the purest age in this, why not also in other things? Why not in twenty, as well as one? And why might not twenty others do it as well as he [2]?

As to *Ireneus's* manner of expounding the Scriptures, it is much the same with that of *Justin*, or rather, according to *Dr. Grabe*, with that of the age, in which he lived: following no rule of criticism; nor giving any attention to the proper signification of words; but indulg-

[1] Obtinuit hæc sententia apud patres fere omnes, c. vi. 4. p. 5.

[2] See his *Additional Discourses*, p. 36, 37. at the end of his Works, in Edit. Strictur. Patrum. in Gen. 7th.

ing a wild and enthusiastic fancy, in the invention of typical senses, and forced allusions, utterly trifling and contemptible: *which those, who read the Fathers, must always bear in mind, as a learned Critic observes, or they will be drawn into great and frequent errors* [1].

Treating of the distinction of Animals into clean and unclean, he says; “The law foretold these things figuratively; by animals denoting men. Those, who divide the hoof and chew the cud, it pronounces clean: those, who do neither, unclean. Who then are clean? Those, who believe in the Father and the Son. This is their Firmness or double hoof: and to meditate day and night on the laws of God, so as to be adorned with good works, is to chew the cud. But the unclean neither divide the hoof nor chew the cud: that is, neither have faith in God, nor meditate on his laws. This is the abomination of the Gentiles. But such as chew the cud, and do not divide the hoof, are unclean: this is a figurative description of the *Jews* [2].”

[1] Quorum nec stylus perpetuo animo obversari magnopere est elaboratus, oportet, ni in frequentes & nec ratiocinationes ad rectæ graves errores incidere velint. Jo. Cleric. Hist. Eccles. rationis & veræ criticæ normam exactæ, nec notiones p. 775.

[2] Prædixit hæc omnia figuraliter lex, de animalibus delineans hominem.— Qui sunt ergo mundi? qui in Patrem & Filium per Fidem

With

With much more to the same purpose. In which method of reasoning, as he followed *Barnabas*, and the Apostolic Fathers, so he was followed himself by the later writers; and especially by *Clemens of Alexandria*, who has copied this very passage [1].

Again, endeavouring to prove that the *Mosaic law* was to fill up the middle age of the world, between the natural law, and the law of Christ, he says; “ This was typically shewn by many
 “ things, but especially by *Thamar*, daughter-
 “ in-law to *Judas*. For when she was bring-
 “ ing out twins, one of them put out his hand
 “ the first; and as the midwife supposed him to
 “ be the first-born, she tied a scarlet string about
 “ his hand. But when this was done, he drew
 “ in his hand again, and his brother *Phares*
 “ came out first; and after him *Zara*, who had
 “ the mark. The Scripture clearly manifest-
 “ ing by it the people, who had the scarlet sign;
 “ that is, the faith professed by those of the fore-
 “ skin, or the uncircumcised: which was first
 “ shewn out in the Patriarchs, and then with-
 “ drawn, that its brother might be brought out
 “ first; and then he be born afterwards, who
 “ had been shewn before, and was known by

iter firmiter faciunt: hæc est enim firmitas eorum, qui duplicis sunt unguis, etc. l. v. c. viii.

[1] Καθαρά κ' δεινὰ τῷ θεῷ παρεδίδασιν ἡ γὰρ κ' ὡς αὐτὸς

πύργου κ' εἰς εἶδόν διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῶν δικαίων τὴν πορείαν ποιημάτων, αὐτὴ γ' ἡ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐδρασίη. Strom. l. vii. xviii. p. 900. Ed. Oxon.

“ the

“ the scarlet sign : which is the passion of the
 “ Just one : præfigured from the beginning in
 “ *Abel*, described by the Prophets, but perfected
 “ in the last days by the Son of God [1].”

His reasoning also upon the number of the Gospels is in the same strain : “ It is impossible, says he, that there could have been more or less than four. For there are four climates, and four cardinal winds ; and the Church is spread over the whole earth ; but the Gospel is the pillar and foundation of the Church, and its breath of life. The Church, therefore, was to have four pillars, blowing immortality from every quarter, and giving life to men [2]. &c.”

[1] Hoc & per alia quidem multa, jam vero & per Thamar Judæ nurum typice ostenditur, etc. l. iv. c. 42.

[2] Neque autem plura numero quam hæc sunt, neque rursus pauciora capit esse Evangelia. Ἐπειδή—τέσσαρα κλίματα τῷ κόσμῳ, ἐν ᾗ ἵσμεν, εἰσι, καὶ τέσσαρα καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἀνθρώπων, etc. l. iii. p. 220, 21.

N. B. This puts me in mind of a specimen also of Tertullian's judgment and way of reasoning, on the question ; why the number of the Apostles was twelve, and no other. I can account for this, says he, not onely by the voices of the Prophets, but by arguments drawn

from things : for I find this number prefigured to us by the Creator. There were twelve wells in *Elim* ; twelve gemms in the vest of *Aaron* ; twelve stones chosen by *Josuea* out of the river *Jordan*, and deposited in the Ark of the covenant : by all which the twelve Apostles were signified ; who, like fountains, were to water the dry desert of the Gentile world ; like gemms, to illuminate the sacred Vestment of the Church which Christ the High Priest put on : and like stones, were firm in the faith. Cont. Marcion. l. iv. p. 59 D.

I have been the fuller in opening the characters and opinions of *Justin* and *Irenæus*, that I might save myself the trouble of enlarging in the same manner on the rest: especially as their characters will be sufficiently illustrated, by the specimens of them occasionally interspersed, in the sequel of this argument. But the later Fathers, generally speaking, do but copy the notions, and even the blunders of these two. For as they are the earliest, who have left any considerable works behind them, so they are the first likewise in credit and authority with succeeding ages, on the account of their piety, learning, and abilities: and the case was the same with the antients, as it is still with the moderns; that when any facts or doctrines have once been established by men of eminent character, they are usually taken upon trust by all who follow, till some new inquirer arises, who, not content with opinions imposed on him by chance or education, resolves to judge for himself, and to use his natural right and liberty of searching into the real grounds of them.

For instance; *St. Clemens of Rome* having alledged the ridiculous story of the *Phoenix*, as a *type and proof of the resurrection*; all the later Fathers take it from him of course, and refer us to the same bird, not onely as really existing, but as created on purpose by God, to refute the incredulity of the Gentiles, on the subject of this great article of our faith. Yet all the heathen writers, from whom they borrowed the story,
from

from *Herodotus*, down to their own times, treat it as nothing else but a mere fable [1]. The case is the same with all the other facts, and absurd doctrines above specified; of the *Millennium*; of *Angels debauching women, and begetting Demons*; of the *divinity of the Septuagint version*; of the *destruction of the sacred Scriptures in the Babylonish captivity, &c.* In all which, these two Fathers, whose principles I have been illustrating, were implicitly followed, for a century or two at least, by all their successors. *Irenæus*, indeed, stands single in his account of *the old age of Christ*; though confidently affirmed by him, on the pretended authority of all the Apostles; because it was evidently inconsistent with the history of the Gospels. But the later Fathers generally ran into a contrary extreme, and affirmed, what was maintained by the *Heretics onely of Irenæus's days, that our Lord preached but one complete year, and died at the age of thirty*: which, according to *Clemens of Alexandria*, was both foretold by the Prophets, and affirmed by the Evangelists [2]. Whereas from the history of the Gospels, it is evident, that his

[1] Ἐμὸν μὲν ἔστι πικρὰ λέγούσης, etc. Herodot. 1. ii. § 73. Vid. it. Whitby Stric- tur. Patr. in Psalm xcii. 12. p. 85. it. Bochart. Hierozoic. Par. post. 1. vi. c. v. p. 817.

[2] Καὶ ὅτι ἑναυθὸν μόνον ἔδει αὐτὸν κηρύξαι, καὶ τῷτο γέγραπται ἔσται. ἑναυθὸν δὲ κήρὸν

κυρίου κηρύξαι ἀπέπειλέ με. τῷτο καὶ ὁ προφήτης εἶπεν, καὶ τὸ Εὐ- αγγέλιον. Strom. i. p. 407. Vid. Not. in loc. Edit. Oxon. Quinto decimo anno imperiï [Tiberii] passus est Christus, annos habens triginta cum pateretur. Tertull. adv. Jud. p. 215.

ministry continued through *several successive Passovers*, or, as Sir *Isaac Newton* has with great probability computed, through five; and that he died in his *thirty-fourth year* [1].

Now from what I have above collected, it is certain, that if a gross absurdity of opinions, and the belief of things impossible, be the proof of a weak mind; if expositions of the Scriptures, void of reason and common sense, betray a great want of judgement, then we may justly charge those defects upon these ancient fathers; from whose foolish reasonings, both in religion and morality, whole books have been compiled [2].

[1] Thus have we, in the Gospels of *Matthæw* and *John*, all things told in due order, from the beginning of *John's* preaching to the Death of Christ; and the years distinguished by such essential characters, that they cannot be mistaken. Observat. on the Proph. of Dan. c. xi. p. 159.

[2] Vid. Dan. Whitby, *Stricturæ Patrum*—*Traité de la Morale des Peres*. Par Jean Barbeyrac—*Dallaus*, etc.

N. B. I shall here take the liberty to transcribe the following note, from a very ingenious and candid Advocate of Christianity, the Rev. *Archdeacon of Carlisle*, as it exhibits a just idea of the

characters and writings of the earliest Fathers.

“ Christianity was in its
“ infancy, at most in its
“ childhood, when these men
“ wrote, and therefore it is no
“ wonder, that they *spoke as*
“ *children*, that they *under-*
“ *stood as children*, that they
“ *thought as children*. This
“ was according to the œco-
“ nomy they were then un-
“ der. And besides, they
“ had not time and leisure
“ to search into the Christi-
“ an doctrines, nor had they
“ laid in a sufficient stock
“ and fund for that purpose,
“ they being but newly
“ adopted into the Christian
“ Church: yet they were
“ willing to appear in its be-
“ half, and to defend it as

Mr.

Mr. *Dodwell*, one of their most zealous admirers, does not pretend to defend them on this head; but frankly owns, that their way of reasoning is *loose, sophistical, and declamatory*; *far short of the solidity of the moderns*; who excel them not only in *philosophy and learning*, but in the *knowledge of antiquity, and even of their own languages*: and all that he pleads for in favour of their interpretations, especially of the New Testament, is, *that they should not be wholly slighted, though they have but little sense in them, because they were agreeable to the custom or taste of those ages* [1].

“ well as they could, which
 “ was accepted by Heaven.”
 [Edwards’s *Patrologia*, p.
 57.] “ Let me not be cen-
 “ sured, though I should be
 “ so bold as to say, that we
 “ should have understood
 “ the Scriptures much bet-
 “ ter, if we had not had the
 “ writings of the Fathers;
 “ for they have obscured and
 “ depraved them by their
 “ different and contrary
 “ comments: They have
 “ raised controversies, taught
 “ men to quarrel and dis-
 “ pute about the sense of
 “ several texts, which other-
 “ wise are plain and obvi-
 “ ous; and about several
 “ matters of practice, which
 “ are evident enough in
 “ themselves, some of which
 “ are superstitious,” &c. lb.

p. 135. See *Considerations*
 on the State of the world
 with regard to Religion, &c.
 p. 174.

[1] *Quin bonas litteras*
studiosius excultas a nuperis
nostris Ecclesie Reformato-
ribus libenter agnoscimus.
Nec in philosophia modo,
sed in antiquitate, in ipsis
etiam linguis eorum tempo-
rum vernaculis. Sed & pres-
ficiorem nostris & solidiorem
argumentandi methodum ag-
nosimus, quam sic alia illa
laxior & sophistica & decla-
matoria, que non apud Pa-
tres dumtaxat; sed & alios
eorundem temporum Scrip-
tores erat receptissima—
Dodwell, Præfat. ad Dissertat.
in Iren. § 12.

Sic illis nimirum deserendum esse in *Scripturarum in-*

As to the quæſtion of their veracity, it may admit perhaps ſome debate, and it will probably be thought harſh in the opinion of many, to ſuſpect men of ſuch piety and ſanctity of life, either of the invention, or the propagation of known forgeries. Yet there are many things ſo peremptorily affirmed, without any ground of truth or probability, by the two Fathers, whoſe characters I have been conſidering, as to give us too much cauſe for ſuch a ſuſpicion: which, as we have ſeen above, has been actually charged on *Juſtin*, by men of learning, and may, with equal reaſon, be charged alſo on *Irenæus*. For what other account can be given of his frequent appeals to the tradition and teſtimony of the Apoſtles, for the ſupport of ſo many abſurd and incredible doctrines? If the doctrines themſelves be falſe; the pretended tradition of them could not poſſibly be true: and if we abſolve *Irenæus* from the forgery; it muſt be charged on ſomebody elſe, more antient ſtill, and of authority enough, to impoſe it upon him; and on whomſoever it may fall, it gives but a lamentable idea of thoſe primitive ages, and primitive champions of the Chriſtian cauſe.

Papias, who is ſuppoſed to have been the diſciple of St. *John*, and Biſhop of *Hierapolis*, is ſaid to have given riſe to moſt of the fabulous traditions, which obtained in thoſe early days.

terpretatione cenſemus, ut ne rint in more ſeculi, place
quidem ratiocinia alioqui mi- negligenda ſint. Ibid. § 16.
nus ſolida, quæ tamen fue-

Dr. *Whitby* joins *Irenæus* to him, and says, “ it
 “ is very remarkable, that these two earliest
 “ writers of the second century, who, on the
 “ credit of idle reports and uncertain fame,
 “ have delivered to us things said to be done by
 “ the Apostles, and their scholars, have shame-
 “ fully imposed upon us, by the forgery of fa-
 “ bles and false stories [1].” But whoever
 forged the rest of the spurious traditions above
 recited, yet that, which relates to *the old age of*
Jesus, the most solemnly attested of them all,
 and peculiar to *Irenæus*, may be fairly presumed
 to be his own forgery, because it was never em-
 braced by any body else, and was singularly
 adapted to the argument, which he was then
 asserting, in opposition to certain Heretics, cal-
 led *Valentinians*, who allowed *but one entire year*
 to our Saviour’s ministry [2].

But be that as it will ; since the very earliest of
 all traditions, and the nearest to the fountain’s
 head, are found to be so corrupt ; it will demon-
 strate at least, what a treacherous foundation they
 must be, to build any opinion upon, and much
 more, any article of our faith ; which might
 be exemplified by many other instances from the

[1] Id denique imprimis observandum est, duos primos Scriptores secundi seculi, qui ex rumoriculis fama que dubia res gestas a Domini Apostolis, eorumque discipulis nobis tradiderunt,— fabulis fingendis, falsisque

narrationibus, nobis turpiter illuisse. Præf. ad Strictur. Patr. p. lxxiii.

[2] Ἐκαστὴ γὰρ ἐν βέλῳ τῆ αὐτῶ μὲν τὸ βαπτισμα οὐτῶ κειροχρησι. Iren. l. i. c. i. p. 16.

history of the first centuries. For as soon as religious disputes began to infest the Church, the plea of Apostolical tradition was presently employed, as the most effectual to silence an adversary ; and was taken up therefore and urged with equal confidence by all sides. And it is an argument indeed, which of all others seems the best calculated for the use of controversy : for wherever it meets with credit, it must necessarily have great weight ; and where it happens even to find none, yet it cannot easily be confuted ; as not being reducible to any clear test, or fixed rule, by which it may be tried. It is not therefore strange, to find its authority carried so high, and in some cases, magnified even above the Scriptures themselves, by all the dealers in controversy, from the earliest Fathers down to Dr. *Waterland*.

For example ; in that most antient and celebrated dispute between the eastern and western Churches, *about the time of holding their Easter*, St. *Polycarp*, Bishop of *Smyrna*, the Disciple and immediate Successor of the Apostles, and *Anicetus* his contemporary, the Bishop of *Rome*, severally alledged the authority of *Apostolic tradition* for their different practice, from which neither of them could be induced to depart [1]. But *Papias*, as it is hinted above, the disciple of

[1] Οὐτε γὰρ ὁ Ανίκητος τὸν Ἀποστόλων, αἱ συνδιέτριψεν, αἰεὶ Πόλυκαρον πείσαι ἐβούλο μὴ τρεῖν ἅτε μὲν Ἰωάννης τῷ μαθητῆ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν Ἀποστόλων, αἱ συνδιέτριψεν, αἰεὶ τέλει κότε, etc. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 24.

Polycarp, was the chief promotor and assertor of it: “as oft, says he, as I met with any one, who had conversed with the antients, I always inquired very diligently after their sayings and doctrines: what *Andrew, Peter, Philip, John*, — and the rest of our Lord’s Apostles used to teach. For I was persuaded, that I could not profit so much by books, as by the voice of living witnesses [1].” *Irenæus*, the scholar of *Papias*, who had learnt the use of it from his master, was likewise a zealous assertor of it. “If a dispute, says he, should arise, about any matter, though but of little moment, ought we not to have recourse to the most antient Churches, in which the Apostles resided, and take from them what is certain and clear about the point in question [2]? *Tertullian* declares it to be the onely weapon, that can knock down an Hæretic: and in all such controversies, advances its authority above the Scriptures; nay, forbids any appeal to the Scriptures, as

[1] Εἰ δὲ παρὰ παρεκκλησιαστικῶς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἔλθοι, τὸς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνεκείνων λόγους. τί Ἀνδρέας, ἢ τί Πέτρος εἶπεν, ἢ τί Φίλιππος, ἢ τί Θωμᾶς, ἢ Ἰάκωβος, ἢ τί Ἰωάννης, ἢ Ματθαῖος, ἢ τίς ἕτερος τῶν τῶ Κυρίου μαθητῶν, etc. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. 1. iii. c. xxxix. p. 136.

[2] Refert *Irenæus*, vir Apostolicorum temporum, & *Papiæ*, auditoris Evangelistæ Joannis, discipulus. Hieron.

Ep. liiii. ad Theodoram. Op. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 581. Edit. Benedict.

Et si aliquibus de aliqua modica questione disceptatio esset, nonne oporteret in antiquissimas recurrere Ecclesias, in quibus Apostoli conversati sunt, & ab eis de presenti questione sumere quod certum & re liquidum est? 1. iii. c. iv. p. 205.

hurtful to the cause of truth. *We must not appeal to the Scriptures*, says he, *or trust the merits of the cause with them: in which there can either be no victory, or an uncertain one, or what is equivalent to uncertain* [1]. And in this, Dr. *Waterland* declares, *that he seems to have judged well, upon the prudential case, and like a wise and sagacious man, with regard to the circumstances of those times* [2]. And in another place the same learned Doctor observes, from the authority of *Irenæus*, *that Polycarp had converted great numbers to the Faith by the strength of tradition; being a sensible argument, and more affecting, he says, at that time, than any dispute from the bare letter of the Scripture could be* [3].

Here then we see in short, the origin and history of tradition. *Papias*, a weak and silly man, who mistook the sense of the Apostles, was the first, who made it his particular business to recommend the use of it, and for that purpose took the pains to collect all the unwritten facts and sayings of Christ and his Apostles, from the report of those, who had conversed with them. These sayings, as *Eusebius* tells us, consisted of a number of *strange parables, and doctrines of our Saviour, with several other fabu-*

[1] Ergo non ad Scripturas provocandum est: nec in his constituendum certamen; in quibus aut nulla aut incerta victoria est, aut par incertæ. De præscript. Hæreticor. 19.

[2] Wherein to me he seems to have judged very well upon the prudential case, and like a wise and sagacious man. Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 378.

[3] Ibid. p. 380. Not. y. lous

lous stories; which the authority of so venerable a person, who had lived with the Apostles, imposed upon the Church for genuine [1]: and

[1] Καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς συγγραφεὺς, ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγράφευ, εἰς αὐτὸν ἤκουσα παρατίθεσθαι, ξένας τὲ τινος παραδιδούς τῷ Σωτῆρι καὶ διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ τινὰ ἄλλα μυθικώτερον. Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 39.

than of things, which had happened to him much later. [Euseb. v. 20.] He was well acquainted also with *Papias*, whom he calls an ancient man: which makes it seem probable, both that *Papias* was contemporary with the Apostle *John*, and that *Irenæus* could not be mistaken in his account of *Papias's* master, which he might have received from *Papias* himself: and for this reason, the generality of the modern writers prefer the authority of *Irenæus* to that of *Eusebius*, who lived two hundred years later. Yet after all, it is evident, from the express words of *Papias*, as they are cited by *Eusebius*, that *Papias* had never personally heard or known any of the Apostles, but received his reports of them only from those, who had: and that *Irenæus* therefore was deceived by the identity of the name, and had never heard perhaps of that other *John*, called the *Presbyter*; who is supposed by some of the principal Fathers, to have written the second and third *Epistles*, as well

N. B. Nothing more effectually demonstrates [the uncertainty of all tradition, than what is delivered to us by Antiquity, concerning this very *Papias*. *Irenæus* declares him, to have been the companion of *Polycarp*, and the Disciple of *St. John* the Apostle. [l. v. c. 33.] But *Eusebius* tells us, that he was not a disciple of *John* the Apostle, but of *John*, called the *Elder* or *Presbyter*, who was a companion only of the Apostles: and whom *Irenæus* by mistake imagined to be the Apostle. [Hist. l. iii. 38.] Now *Irenæus* might probably be born while *St. John* was still living, and had conversed very familiarly in his youth with *Polycarp*, the disciple of that Apostle, and declares, that he retained the memory of all things which he had learnt from him, more distinctly,

the

the gravity of his scholar *Irenæus* confirmed and propagated to succeeding ages : through which, every one still added to the collection, whatever he thought useful to the particular cause or opinion, that he favored. This account of the matter, deduced from the testimony of antiquity itself, confutes at once all the extravagant encomiums, which our leading Divines so lavishly bestow on those primitive Fathers, and their traditions. For if the earliest and best vouched traditions of all, which are transmitted to us, be true, or at all to be regarded, it follows of course, that we ought to receive the absurd doctrines abovementioned, as articles of faith; *the fable of the Millennium; of Angels begetting Demons on the bodies of women; of the old age of Christ, of Ænoch translated into Adam's paradise;* with many more of the same stamp; which were all embraced by the earliest Fathers, and delivered to us, on the authority of the Apostles, by some of their immediate Successors; and especially by those four, on whom Dr. *Waterland* lays the greatest stress; *Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenæus, and Clemens of Alexandria;* “ eminent personages, as he says,

as *the book of Revelations*, now ascribed to the Apostle. [Euseb. Hist. iii. 38. Hieron. Catalog. Scriptor. de Joan. Apost. & Papias.] The learned Mr. *Dodwell* therefore declares it to be certain, that *John, the Master of Papias,*

was a different man from the Apostle; and consequently that Irenæus himself, and Polycrates his contemporary, and Clemens Alexandrinus also, who was but a little younger, were all mistaken, with regard to this fact. Disser. in Iren. i. § iv.

“ who

“ who flourished within fifty, sixty, or at most
“ ninety years from the Apostolic age. Whose
“ nearness to the time ; known fidelity ; admi-
“ rable indowments ordinary and extraordinary,
“ add great weight to their testimony or doc-
“ trine, and make it a probable rule of inter-
“ pretation in the prime things [1].” To which
he subjoins, in a marginal note, “ that *Clemens*,
“ tho’ the latest of the four, yet testifies of himself,
“ that he had received his doctrine from several
“ disciples of the very chief Apostles ; who had
“ truly preserved the tradition of the blessed
“ doctrine, as it came directly from the holy
“ Apostles, *Peter, James, and John.*” Not-
withstanding all which, the Doctor could not
but know, that this very *Clemens* holds as many
absurd, unfound, and exploded doctrines, and
deals as largely in the fabulous and apocryphal
books of the primitive Christians, as any other
Father whatsoever. These facts shew likewise
the weakness of that argument, which the Doc-
tor alledges for the truth of doctrines, from *the*
unanimity, with which they are asserted by the
antient writers. “ This is the argument, says
“ he, which *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* insist much
“ upon and triumph in, over the Hæretics of
“ their days — for it is highly unreasonable to
“ suppose, that Churches distant in place, and
“ of different languages, and under no common
“ visible head, should all unite in the same er-
“ rors — Again, such unanimity could never
[1] Import of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 369.

“ come

“ come by chance, but must be derived from
 “ one common source : and therefore the har-
 “ mony of their doctrine was in itself a pregnant
 “ argument of the truth of it [1].” But if the
 unanimity of the primitive Fathers must be al-
 lowed to have so great a force, as to evince the
 truth of any opinion, it would necessarily estab-
 lish all those monstrous doctrines above speci-
 fied ; since it would be difficult to produce any
 other whatsoever, in which there was so great an
 harmony among them, or so general a consent
 of the whole Church, through the three first
 centuries, and that intirely grounded upon the
 pretence of Apostolic tradition.

But I cannot dismiss this article of the doctrines
 and opinions of these antient Fathers, without
 taking notice of one, which was universally re-
 ceived and believed through all ages of the pri-
 mitive Church, *viz.* “ that there were a number
 “ of Magicians, Necromancers or Conjurers,
 “ both among the Gentiles and the Hæretical
 “ Christians, who had each their particular Dæ-
 “ mons or evil Spirits, for their associates, per-
 “ petually attending on their persons, and ob-
 “ sequious to their commands ; by whose help
 “ they could perform miracles, foretell future
 “ events, call up the Souls of the dead, exhibit
 “ them to open view, and infuse into People
 “ whatever dreams or visions they thought fit.”
 — All which is constantly affirmed by the
 Primitive Writers and Apologists, and com-

[1] *Ibid.* p. 372, 3.

monly applied by them to prove the immortality of the Soul.

“ Let the powers of Necromancy, says *Justin Martyr*, and the evocations of human Souls, and of boys especially who had suffered violent deaths, and of those Spirits, whom the Magicians call the Inspirers of dreams and affections, and the works, which are performed by the skilful in these arts, convince you, that the souls of men exist still after death [1].”

Lactantius, speaking of certain philosophers, who held, that the soul perished with the body, says, “ they durst not have declared such an opinion, in the presence of any Magician, or if they had done it, he would have confuted them upon the spot, by sensible experiments; by calling up souls from the dead, and rendering them visible to human eyes, and making them speak and foretell future events [2].”

The Author of the book, called, the *Recognition of St. Clemens*, one of the most antient and most learned of those many spurious pieces, which were forged by the first Christians, affirms, “ that *Simon Magus* confessed to one of his companions, that he wrought all his amazing works, by the help of the Soul of

[1] Apol. i. p. 27. Edit. Thirlb.

[2] Qui profecto non audent de interitu animarum, Mago aliquo presentate, dif-

ferere, qui sciret certis carminibus eiere ab Inferis animas, &c. Divin. Institut. l. vii c. 13.

“ an healthy young boy, who had been violent-
 “ ly put to death for that purpose, and then
 “ called up from the dead, by ineffable adjura-
 “ tions, and compelled to be his assistant [1].”

Irenæus, giving an account of the disciples of the same *Simon*, tell us, “ that they lived
 “ lewdly, exercising magical arts, and using
 “ exorcisms, incantations, and love-charms,
 “ and industriously practising all other curious
 “ arts, by the assistance of their familiar Spirits
 “ and Inspirers of dreams [2].” And speaking
 “ afterwards of the Hæretic *Carpocrates* and his
 “ followers, he says, “ These likewise practise
 “ magical arts, with incantations and love-
 “ charms, and have their assistant Dæmons and
 “ Inspirers of dreams, with all the other male-
 “ volent Spirits [3].

“ The Magicians, says *Clemens of Alexandria*,
 “ boast of Dæmons, as the Ministers of their
 “ impiety, reckoning them part of their family,
 “ and forcing them by their incantations, to be
 “ the slaves of their will [4].”

[1] Pueri, inquit, incorrupti & violenter necati animam adjuramentis ineffabilibus evocatam adistere mihi feci, & per ipsam fit omne quod jubeo. Lib. ii. c. xiii. Edit. Cotelerii.

[2] Igitur horum Mystici Sacerdotes libidinosè quidem quidem vivunt; Magias autem perficiunt — exorcismis & incantationibus utuntur,

&c. Adv. Hæres. l. i. c. xx.

[3] Artes etiam Magicas operantur & ipsi, & incantationes & philtrea. Quoque & charitesia, & paredros, & oneirepompos & reliquas malignationes, &c.—ib. c. xxix.

[4] Μάγοι δὲ ἔτι ἀσεβείας τῆς σφῶν αὐτῶν ὑπερτέρας δαίμονας αὐχῶσι. &c. Cohort. ad Gent. p. 52. Edit. Potter.

Tertullian declares of these Dæmons, “ that
 “ they had the power of inflicting horrible dis-
 “ eases both on the minds and bodies of men,
 “ and even cruel deaths; yet they frequently
 “ contrived to cure the disorders which they
 “ had wrought, in order to support the credit
 “ of their divinity, and the honor of their Al-
 “ tars, and secure to themselves their proper
 “ food and nourishment from the rich steams
 “ and blood of the victims, which were offered
 “ to them [1].” For this likewise, as mon-
 strous as it is, was the common opinion of all
 the Fathers, taken, as usual, upon trust, from
 the authority of *Justin Martyr*, who was proba-
 bly the inventor of it, “ that the Dæmons, after
 “ they had given themselves up to their lusts
 “ and lewd debaucheries with boys and women,
 “ began to want the rich fumes and the fat of
 “ sacrifices, to strengthen them for the enjoy-
 “ ment of their lustfull pleasures [2].”

Cyprian affirms, “ that they commonly lay
 “ lurking within the statues and images of the
 “ Heathen Deities; inspired the breasts of the
 “ Soothsayers; animated the fibres of the en-

[1] Itaque corporibus qui-
 dem & valetudines infligunt,
 & aliquos casus acerbos; ani-
 mæ vero repentinos, & ex-
 traordinarios per vim exces-
 sus. — Ut sibi pabula propria
 nidoris & sanguinis procuret
 — Benefici plane & circa
 curas valetudinum. Lædunt

enim primo, dehinc remedia
 præcipiunt. Apologet. c. xxii.
 Pluribus notum est Dæmoni-
 orum quoque opera & immat-
 uras & atroces effici mortes.
 — De Anim. c. lvii.

[2] Ὅτι ἐπιθεῖς γυροῦσιν μετὰ
 τὸ πάθειν ἐπιθυμίαν διαλαθῆσαι,
 etc. Apol. p. 113 Edit. Thirlb.

“ trails of victims ; directed the flight of birds,
 “ and the chances of lots ; involving falsehood
 “ always with truth, and themselves sometimes
 “ deceived, as well as deceiving others ; disqui-
 “ eted the lives of men ; disturbed their sleep ;
 “ excited terrors in their minds, convulsions
 “ in their bodies ; destroyed health, and brought
 “ on diseases, so as to force people to worship
 “ them ; that being filled and fatted by the
 “ steams of Altars and burnt sacrifices, they
 “ might seem to cure the maladies, which they
 “ had inflicted ; whereas all the cure, which
 “ they performed, was by ceasing onely to do
 “ hurt [1].”

And as the whole system of Pagan Idolatry was believed by the Fathers to have been managed by the craft and agency of Dæmons, so the whole art of Magic was supposed also to be carried on by the same powers, for the sake of deluding and destroying mankind. In the case of Idolatry, they imagined them to assume the names, and to act the parts of the Heathen Gods, and in Magic to assume the forms of departed souls, and to appear under the names of those, who were called up from the dead ; and as such, to foretell future events, and answer to all questions, which should be demanded of them. And the reason which they give, why the souls called up from the dead were chiefly of those,

[1] Hi ergo Spiritus sub suo Vatum pectora inspirant,
 statuis & imaginibus consecratis delitescunt. Hi afflatu
 &c. De idolor. van. p. 206.

who had been put to a violent death, is, because such spirits were generally thought to be the most malevolent and revengefull, and ready to perpetrate the same acts of violence on others, which they themselves had injuriously suffered [1].

Now the opinion, which I have here explained, is not onely a proof of the grossest credulity, but of that peculiar species of it, which, of all others, lays a man the most open to the delusive arts of Impostors. For a mind, so totally possessed by superstitious fancies, and disturbed by vain terrors, could not have either the judgement to discern, or the inclination to examine, or the courage even to suspect, the pretensions of those vagrant Jugglers, who, in those primitive ages, were so numerous, and so industriously employed in the affair of deluding their fellow creatures. Every man will perceive, how easy it must have been to men of that class, whether Heathens, Jews, or Christians (for they are all allowed to have had such Impostors among them) to impose the tricks of their art, as the effects of a supernatural power, on a multitude already persuaded that they lived on magic ground, exposed at every step to snares and charms, contrived by malicious Spirits perpe-

[1] Itaque invocantur quidem aori & Bizæothanati, sub illo fidei argumento, quod incredibile videatur, eas potissimum animas ad vim & injuriam facere, quas per vim & injuriam sævus & immaturus finis extorsit, quasi ad vicem offensæ. Tert. De anim. c. lvii. Cypr. ib. 206.

tually haunting them, and watching every unguarded moment, to get possession both of their souls and bodies [1]. And when pious Christians are arrived to this pitch of credulity, as to believe, that evil spirits or evil men can work real miracles, in defiance and opposition to the authority of the Gospel, their very piety will oblige them to admit as miraculous whatever is pretended to be wrought in the defence of it, and so make them of course the implicit dupes of their own wonder-workers.

IV. I shall now procede, as I propos'd, to take a particular review of all the several gifts, or miraculous powers, which were actually claimed, and pretended to have been possessed by the primitive Church : which, according to the testimonies produced above, were, *the power of raising the dead; of healing the sick; of casting out Devils; of prophesying; of seeing visions; of discovering the secrets of men; of expounding the scriptures; of speaking with tongues.*

SECT. I. As to the first, and the principal indeed of all miracles, that of raising the dead; it was frequently performed, as *Irenæus* affirms, *on necessary occasions; and men so raised had lived afterwards among them many years;* but it is very strange, that from the time of the Apostles,

[1] Nam & suggestimus nullum pæne hominem carere Daemonio. Tert. ib.

there is not an Instance of this miracle to be found in the three first centuries; except a single case, slightly intimated by *Eusebius* from the books of *Papias*; which he seems to rank among the other fabulous stories delivered by that weak man [1].

It is certain, that if a miracle of so surprizing a nature had been so frequent, as *Irenæus* affirms it to have been; or performed, as it were, in every parish, or place where there was a Christian Church, it must have made great noise in the world, and been celebrated, not onely by the primitive Fathers, but by all the Historians of those times. But it was so far from being commonly or openly effected, as every miracle should necessarily be, which is wrought for the conversion of Infidels, that all the enemies of the Gospel, as *Irenæus* himself confesses, constantly affirmed *the thing itself to be impossible* [2]. A sure proof, that they had never seen or known it to be done, unless in such a manner, as carried with it a strong suspicion of fraud or collusion. Mr. *Dodwell* however, from this single authority of *Irenæus*, asserts the miraculous powers of the second century to be superior even to those of the first, or Apostolic age. *They raised the dead*, says he, *in the Apostolic Churches*;

[1] Νεκρῶν γὰρ αἰάσασιν, καὶ αὐτοὶ γελωνῶσαν ἴσασθαι, καὶ αὐτῶν πάλιν ἕτερον παράδοξον περιῆδειν, &c. Hist. Eccl. iii. 39.

ab eo, ut mortuum ipsi ex-
tent, ut ne quidem credant,
hoc in totum posse fieri. Iren.
l. ii. c. 56.

[2] Tantum enim absunt

yet we have few examples of it in the genuin acts of the Apostles: but in Irenæus's days, they raised not a few, but very often [1]. And in the same strain he runs through all the other miracles of the primitive times, and gives them the preference, in their number at least, to those of the Apostles; yet is forced to own, after all, that towards the end of the second century, and while Irenæus himself might be still living, this power of raising the dead was lost and vanished. For in the very same age, when one *Autolytus*, an eminent heathen, challenged his friend *Theophilus*, Bishop of *Antioch*, a convert and champion of the Gospel, to shew him but one person, who had been raised from the dead, on the condition of turning Christian himself upon it; *Theophilus* discovers by his answer, that he was not able to give him that satisfaction [2]. Upon which Mr. *Dodwell* remarks, that the great number of persons, who had been raised some years before, when the fact was common, were dead again for the second time in this interval; which, for the sake of his hypothesis, he stretches, as well as he can, to forty years [3].

[1] Excitabant mortuos in Ecclesiis Apostolicis, quos tamen raros legimus, —excitabant similiter mortuos fraternitates Irenæi, —nec illos tamen adeo raros, sed sapissime. Dissert. ii. in Irenæi. § XLII. p. 165.

[2] Ὁὐκ ἔστι, ἀδελφὸς μου καὶ ἔτι ἕνα ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἵνα ἰδῶν πιστεύσω, &c. Theoph. ad Au-

tol. l. i. p. 77. c. Ad finem Oper. Just. Mart. Paris. 1639. Defecere item *mortuorum excitations*. Certe *Autolyco* roganti vel unum ostenderet qui fuisset e mortuis revocatus, ita respondit *Theophilus*, quasi vel unum demonstrare minime potuerit. Dissert. in Iren. ii. § XLIV. p. 171.

[3] Quo temporis interval-

BUT

But in truth, the fact itself, as delivered by *Irenæus*, seems to be utterly incredible on many accounts: 1st, That a case of so wonderful a nature, should be common among them, yet not a single instance of it particularly described, or clearly attested in all history. 2dly, That it should be performed in every part of the world, where there was a Church or assembly of Christians; yet all those, who were not of the Church, and for whose sake it was chiefly performed, should be insisting all the while, *that the thing itself was impossible*. 3dly, That it should be common in the days of *Irenæus*, yet *Theophilus*, who lived at the same time, should not be able to alledge a single instance of it, when challenged to it by his friend, whom he was laboring to convert, and who offered to be converted upon the proof of that fact. Lastly, That a power, of all others the most affecting and reputable to the Church, should be withdrawn at a time, when it's adversaries were defying them to shew any effects of it, and putting the merits of the controversy upon that very issue [1]. All which circumstances laid together, must needs leave the strongest suspicion on the claim of the primitive

lo rursus obierint, qui sub initium *Marci Aurelii* fuissent in vitam revocati. Ibid.

[1] This shews the vanity of that distinction, which some are apt to make, between the primitive and the Popish miracles; that the first

were wrought for the sake, and in the midst, of unbelievers; the last among the faithful onely. Contra, recentiorum pleraque in *fideles*; in infideles paucissima, edita feruntur. Dodw. ib. § LXIII.

Church, with regard to this prime miracle of *raising the dead*.

SECT. 2. The next gift said to have resided in it, is that of *healing the sick, and curing all sorts of diseases*: in favor of which the ancient testimonies are more full and express; though with some variation, concerning the method of cure. Some affirm, that it was done by *the imposition of hands* [1]: some, *by invoking the name of God, and of Jesus, and reciting some story of his life* [2]. *And others*, by the use of *oil*: which was consecrated by Holy men, and dispensed to the people for the cure of their diseases. *Tertullian* tells us, “ that a Christian, called *Proculus*, cured the “ Emperor *Severus* of a certain distemper by the “ use of oil: for which service that Emperor “ was favorable afterwards to the Christians, “ and kept *Proculus*, as long as he lived, in his “ Palace [3].” And *St. Jerom* affirms, “ that “ *Hilarion the Monk* used to heal all the wounds “ of the Husbandmen and Shepherds with con- “ secrated oil: and preserved the life of the son- “ in-law and daughter of an holy woman called “ *Constantia*, by anointing them with the

[1] Ἄλλα δὲ τῆς κάμνουσας ἀλ' αὖ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν ἰσῆται. Iren. l. ii. c. 57.

[2] Οὐδὲν ἄλλο καλῶντες ἐπὶ τῆς διορίσεως θεραπείας, ἢ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῶν, ἐν τῷ τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὄνομα, μετὰ τῆς περι αὐτῶ ἰσο- γίας. Con. Cels. l. iii p. 124.

[3] Ipse etiam Severus — Christianorum memor fuit. Nam & Proculum Christianum, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requisivit, & in palatio suo habuit usque ad mortem ejus. Ad Scapul. § 4.

“ fame.”

“same [1].” Yet these cures, if true, might be accounted for probably without a miracle, by the natural power and efficacy of the oil itself, since, in our days, the bite of vipers, after inflaming a man’s arm to a degree which threatened destruction to him, is known to have been checked and cured in a short time, by the application of oil: which might perhaps have been the very case of *Hilarion’s Shepherds*. But be that as it will, the pretence of curing diseases by a miraculous power, was so successfully maintained in the heathen world by fraud and craft, that when it came to be challenged by the Christians, it was not capable of exciting any attention to it among those, who themselves pretended to the same power; which, tho’ the certain effect of imposture, was yet managed with so much art, that the Christians could neither deny nor detect it; but insisted always, that it was performed by *Dæmons* or evil Spirits, deluding mankind to their ruin: and from the supposed reality of the fact, inferred the reasonableness of believing what was more credibly affirmed by the Christians to be performed by the power of the true God. *We do not deny*, says *Athenagoras*, that in different places, cities, and countries, there are some extraordinary works performed in the

[1] *Benedictio itaque oleo, univèrsi agricolæ atque pastores, tangentes vulnera, certam salutem resumebant. Hieroa. in Vit. Hilarion. Oper. Tom iv. par. ii p. 85.*

Sed & Constantia quedam, sancta scœmina, cujus generum & filiam de morte liberaverat unctioe olei. Ibid. p. 90.

name of idols, from which some have received benefit, others harm. But then he goes on to prove, that they were not performed by God, but by *Dæmons* [1]. “ If I should allow, says *Origen*, “ that there is a *Dæmon* cunning in medicine, “ called *Æsculapius*, who cures diseases; yet I “ would say to those, who are surprized at it, “ as well as at the prædictions of *Apollo*, that if “ the cure of diseases and prædiction of events, “ be things of an indifferent nature, and which “ belong to bad, as well as to good beings; “ shew me that those, who cure and foretell, are “ not bad, but good, and worthy to be held in a “ manner as Gods [2].”

Whatever proof then the Primitive Church might have among themselves of this miraculous gift, yet it could have but little effect towards making profelytes among those, who pretended to the same gift; possessed more largely, and exerted more openly, than in the private assemblies of the Christians. For in the Temples of *Æsculapius*, all kinds of diseases were believed to be publickly cured, by the pretended help of that Deity: in proof of which there were erected in each Temple *columns or tables of brass or marble*, on which a distinct narrative of each particular cure was inscribed. *Pausanias* writes,

[1] Τὸ μὲν δὲ κατὰ τύπας καὶ πόλεις καὶ ἔθνη γίνεσθαι τινὰς ἐπὶ αἰματὶ εἰδώλων ἐεργείας. ἐδ’ ἡμῶς ἀπὸ ἀλλήλων. *Athenag. Apol.* p. 25.

τινα Δαίμονα θεραπεύειν σώματα, τὸν καλούμενον Ἀσκληπιόν, εἰποιμὲν ἂν πρὸς τῆς θρυμμάζοντα; τὸ τοιοῦτο. &c. *Con. Cels.* l. iii. p. 124.

[2] Ἴνα δὲ καὶ ἑῶν, Ἰατρικόν

that

“ that in the Temple at *Epidaurus*, there were
 “ many columns anciently of this kind, and six
 “ of them remaining to his time, inscribed with
 “ the names of men and women, who had been
 “ cured by the God, with an account of their
 “ several cases, and the method of their cure :
 “ and that there was an old pillar besides, which
 “ stood apart, dedicated to the memory of *Hip-*
 “ *polytus*, who had been raised from the
 “ dead [1].” *Strabo* also, another grave writer,
 informs us, “ that these Temples were con-
 “ stantly filled with the sick, imploring the help
 “ of the God : and that they had tables hang-
 “ ing around them, in which all the miraculous
 “ cures were described [2].” There is a remark-
 able fragment of one of these tables still extant,
 and exhibited by *Gruter* in his collection, as it
 was found in the ruins of *Æsculapius’s* Temple,
in the island of the Tyber, in Rome ; which gives
 an account of *two blind men restored to sight by*
Æsculapius, in the open view, and with the loud
acclamations of the people, acknowledging the ma-
nifest power of the God. Upon which the learn-
 ed *Montfaucon* makes this reflection, that *in this*
are seen, either the wiles of the Devil, or the tricks

[1] Στῆλαι δ' εἰσῆκεσαν ἐνὸς
 τῷ περιβόλῃ, τὸ μὲν ἀρχαῖον καὶ
 πλείονες, ἐπ' ἑμῷ δὲ ἐξ ἑλοισπαι, &c.
 Corinth. l. ii. c. xxvii.

[2] Καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν πλῆρες ἔχοι-

τοῦ ἀεὶ τῶν τε καμόνων, καὶ τῶν
 ἀνακειμένων πινάκων, ἐν οἷς ἀνα-
 γεγραμμέναι τυγχάνουσι αἱ θερα-
 πείαι. Strab. l. viii. p. 575.

Edit. Amstel.

of Pagan Priests, suborning men to counterfeit diseases and miraculous cures [1].

Now though nothing can support the belief and credit of miracles more authentically, than publick monuments, erected in proof and memory of them, at the time when they were performed; yet, in defiance of that authority, it is certain, that all those heathen miracles were pure forgeries, contrived to delude the credulous multitude. And in truth, this particular claim of *curing diseases miraculously*, affords great room for such a delusion, and a wide field for the exercise of craft. Every man's experience has taught him, that diseases thought fatal and desperate, are often surprizingly healed of themselves, by some secret and sudden effort of nature, impenetrable to the skill of man: but to ascribe this presently to a miracle, as weak and superstitious minds are apt to do; to the prayers of the living, or the intercessions of the dead; is what neither sound reason nor true religion will justify. Wherefore when the narratives of these pretended cures are delivered to us by partial and interested, or by weak and credulous men, they will always furnish reason to suspect, that the relators were either deluded themselves, or willing to delude others: and unless we know more precisely in this case the real bounds between nature and miracle, we cannot pay any great regard to such stories; especially when

[1] See Montfauc. Antiq. Tom. ii. par. i. l. iv. c. 6. it. Gruter. Infer. p. LXXI.

we are informed at the same time by the Christians themselves, that the same cures were performed also by Knaves and Impostors, of all sects and nations; by *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Heretics*; which, according to the principles of those days, were ascribed either to the power of *Dæmons*, or to the magical force of amulets and charms.

Sect. 3. But the most eminent and celebrated of all the miraculous powers of the primitive Church was, the gift of *casting out Devils*, or the cure of *Dæmoniacs*. To this the ancient Fathers and Apologists make the most frequent appeals; and on this they lay the greatest stress, towards evincing the divinity of the Christian Religion. It is not easy however to collect from their accounts, what was the real case of these *Dæmoniacs*, and the proper nature of their malady. The Fathers indeed themselves seem to have been fully persuaded, and labor to persuade everybody else, that they were actually possessed and tormented by Devils, or evil Spirits: yet many learned men of modern times have imagined them rather to have been affected by the *Epilepsy*, or *falling sickness*. Mr. *Dodwell* himself takes their case to have been of this kind, and curable *by the ordinary way of medicine*, as well as the extraordinary one of miracle [1].

[1] Morbum itaque caducum, quem Comitiales seu Regium appellant, curabant passim exorcismis suis cœvi Tertulliani Christiani. Nec enim ego alium censuerim,
And

And it is certain, that the effects constantly ascribed to it seem to be nothing else but the ordinary symptoms of an *Epilepsy*, as they are described by the Physicians. *Justin* speaks of them *as being thrown down always to the ground, by the Devils who possessed them* [1]. And *Crysofom*, in his elaborate consolation to *Stagirius*, who was also possessed, recites all the particulars of his case, as they were related to him by a common friend; *the convulsion of his hands, the distortion of his eyes, the foam of his mouth, his horrid and inarticulate voice, the tremor of his body, and the long privation of his senses* [2]. *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, speaking of a woman also in the same case, says, *that groaning with a terrible and inarticulate voice, different from human, she fell flat on the ground, tearing her hair, her eyes distorted, her mouth foaming: nor did the Devil desist from strangling her, &c.* [3]. Then as to what these

quo laborarint *Dæmoniaci illi a Dæmone præcipitati*.—Nihil enim impedit, quo minus iidem per medicinam possint etiam curari—Dissert. in Iren. ii. § XLVII. p. 175.

[1] Καὶ οἱ ψυχαιῶς ἀποθανόντων λαμβανόμενοι ἢ ἐπιπίετοι ἄθραστοι, ἢ δαιμονολήπτες ἢ μαινομένους καλῶσι πάντες. Apol. i. p. 28.

[2] Τὴν σφειέλωσαν τῶν χειρῶν, τὴν διασφῆν τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς στόματις ἀφρὸν, &c. Tom. i. p. 156. E. Edit. Be-

nedict.

Ita etiam *Plinius*, corruens morbo comitiali, [Hist. N. 28. 6.] atque ita quoque *S. Cyprianus*—irrepentes in corporibus occulte, mentes terrent, membra distorquent, valetudinem frangunt, &c. De idolor. van. p. 206.

[3] Πνεύματι δαιμονίῳ σφειέλωθεῖσα, ἢ βρυχηθῆμιζ θρησῶδες παρὰ τὴν ἀνθρώπινην φωνὴν ἀνομιώξασσα, σίπτεσι πρηγῆς, &c. in Vit. Greg. Thaum. p. 973. B. Oper. Edit. Paris.

Fathers

Fathers declare, concerning their power of *lashing, burning, and tormenting* the Devils; and of their *groaning and howling* under the torture of the Christian exorcism, such an imagination might easily be conceived, from the strange convulsions of the body, and the hollow sighs and groans which commonly attend such fits. And the other circumstances likewise, so constantly attested by them all, concerning *the speeches and confessions of the Devils; their answering to all questions; owning themselves to be wicked spirits; telling whence they came, and whither they were going, and pleading for favor and ease from the hands of the Exorcists,* may not improbably be accounted for, either by the disordered state of the patient, answering wildly and at random to any questions proposed, or by the arts of imposture and contrivance between the parties concerned in the act.

This, I dare say, will appear probable to every impartial reader, who, from the credulous and enthusiastic disposition of these Fathers, and their preconceived and erroneous notions about the origin and power of Dæmons, will be apt to conclude, that they were either induced by their prejudices, to give too hasty a credit to these pretended Possessions; or carried away by their zeal, to assist even in supporting a delusion, which was useful to the Christian cause. And tho' this may sound harsh in the ears of many, it will not appear strange to those, who have given any attention to the history of mankind; which

which will always suggest this sad reflection, That the greatest zealots in religion, or the leaders of sects and parties, whatever purity or principles they pretend to, have seldom scrupled to make use of a commodious lie, for the advancement of what they call the truth. And with regard to these very Fathers, there is not one of them, as an eminent writer of ecclesiastical history declares, who made any scruple in those ages, of using *the hyperbolical style*, to advance the honor of God, and the salvation of men [1]. For it is certain, that the greatest part of the wonderful things, which they relate, are in themselves utterly incredible; and such of them as happen to be the most distinctly described, carry always the greatest marks of art and contrivance, for the sake of serving some particular purpose. For example, *Tertullian*, who was an utter enemy to plays and public shews in the Theaters, wrote a book, to deter all Christians from frequenting them, in which he tells the following story: “ An example hap-
 “ pened, says he, as the Lord is witness, of a
 “ woman, who went to the Theater, and came
 “ back with a Devil in her: whereupon when
 “ the unclean spirit was urged and threatened
 “ in the office of exorcising, for having dared to
 “ attack one of the faithful; *I have done nothing*,
 “ replied he, *but what is very fair, for I found*

[1] In honorem Dei, salu- temporis religioni ducebat.
 temque hominum, hyperbo- Jo. Cleric. Hist. Eccles. p.
 lica oratione uti, nemo tunc 681.

“ *her on my own ground.*” He adds a second story, still more dreadful, of another woman, “ who, in the very night after she had seen a “ tragedy in the Theater, had her winding-sheet “ shewn to her in a vision, in which she was “ reproached by name, with the Tragedian, “ whom she had been seeing, and did not live “ above five days after [1].”

Now in this last case, it is not improbable, that a poor weak woman, who went to sleep under the consciousness of a grievous sin committed by her, might, by the terrors of a dream, be thrown into a disorder that put an end to her life. But in the first, though God himself is appealed to, for the truth of it, yet when we reflect on the principles of those times, and the particular warmth of *Tertullian's* zeal, we cannot but suspect, that the smart answer of the Devil was contrived to enforce what he was so warmly inculcating, the horrible sin and dangerous consequence of frequenting the public Theaters.

It is very remarkable, that all the Fathers, who lay so great a stress on this particular gift of casting out Devils, yet allow the same power both to the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, as well before, as after our Saviour's coming. *Justin Martyr*, in his dialogue with *Trypho the Jew*, says,

[1] Nam & exemplum accidit, Domino teste, ejus mulieris, quæ theatrum adiit, & inde cum Dæmonio rediit. Itaque in exorcismo, cum oneraretur immundus spiritus,

quod ausus esset fidelem adgredi; Constanter & justissime quidem, inquit, feci, in meo eam inveni, &c. — De Spectac. 26.

“ that all Devils yield and submit to the name
 “ of *Jesus*, when they would not, to any other
 “ name of their Kings, Prophets, or Patriarchs :
 “ yet if any should exorcise them in the name
 “ of the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*,
 “ they would in like manner submit. For
 “ your Exorcists, adds he, as well as the Gen-
 “ tiles, use this art in exorcising, together with
 “ certain fumes, and ligatures [1].” And the
Jews, says *Irenæus*, even now, by this same in-
 vocation of the name of God, drive away De-
 vils [2].

Origen, in his dispute with *Celsus*, asserting the descent of the *Jews* from *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, says, “ that these names, joined to
 “ that of God, have such power, that not onely
 “ their own nation use them in their prayers,
 “ and in casting out Devils, but all other In-
 “ chanters and Magicians whatsoever : and
 “ that in magical books, the same invocation
 “ and use of God’s name is often found, as pe-
 “ culiar to the art, and effectual against De-
 “ vils [3].” And speaking of *Abraham’s* great merit, he observes, “ that it is not *Moses* onely,
 “ who celebrates it, but that many of those, who

[1] Ἰδοὺ μέγιστοι οἱ ἐξ ὁμῶν
 ἰπποκρίτου τῆ τέχνης ὡσπερ καὶ τὰ
 ἴθνη χεῖρασι ἐξορκίζουσι, καὶ θυ-
 μιαιμασίαι καὶ καλαδίστοις χερσίναι.
 Dial. par. ii. p. 321.

[2] Et propter hoc Judæi
 usque nunc hac ipsa adfa-
 ctione. Dæmonas effugant. —

L. ii. c. 5. p. 123.

[3] Ὡς τοσοῦτον δύνασαι τὰ
 δόγματα συναπλόμμενα τῆ τῆ θεῶ
 περισηγήσει, ὡς εἰ μόνον τὸς ἀπὸ
 τῆ ἰθιῶς χερσίναι ἐν ταῖς ἀγῶς θεῶ
 εὐχαῖς, καὶ ἐν τῶ καλεσθῶν δαι-
 μονίας, &c. Con. Cels. l. iv. p.
 123, 4.

“ charm or drive out Devils, call upon the God
 “ of *Abraham*, without knowing even who *A-*
 “ *brabam* was [1].” Again, “ if a man, says
 “ he, invoke or exorcise by the name of the God
 “ of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, the Devils will
 “ obey, and do what they are commanded ;
 “ but if he translate those names, according to
 “ their meaning, into any other language, they
 “ will have no force at all. The same, adds
 “ he, is true of the word *Sabaoth*, so much used
 “ in incantations : if it be applied in its original
 “ *Hebrew* it is effectual ; but if translated into
 “ another tongue, so as to put for it *the Lord of*
 “ *Hosts*, it avails nothing, if we believe the
 “ skilful in these matters [2].”

Josephus writes, “ that *Solomon* was particu-
 “ larly instructed by God in the art of casting

[1] Διὸ παραλαμβάσει τὴν,
 Θεὸς Ἀβραάμ, λέξιν, ἐκ ἐπιστά-
 μων δὲ τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἀβραάμ. ib.
 l. i. p. 17.

[2] Τῶ δὲ ὁμοίον ἐρέμεν καὶ
 περὶ τῆς Σαβαὼθ φωνῆς πολλο-
 χῶ τῶν ἐποφῶν παραλαμβανόμε-
 νης ὅτι εἰ μεταλαμβάνομεν τὸ
 ὄνομα εἰς τὸ, Κύριος τῶν δυνάμε-
 ων, — ἔδει ποιήσομεν. ib. l. v.
 p. 262.

N. B. From what is here
 said by *Origen*, and the other
 Fathers, it appears, that the
 power of calling out Devils,
 was considered as a peculiar
 gift, or art rather, grounded
 on certain rules, which were

taught and delivered in
 books ; and was common
 both to the Jews and the
 Heathens, as well as to the
 Christians ; and, among them
 all, was administered by a
 particular set of men, called
Exorcists : who about the
 time of *Origen's* death, or the
 middle of the third Century,
 began to be reckoned among
 the inferior orders of the
 Church : [Vid. *Euseb.* l. vi.
 c. 43.] The form of whose
 ordination is given us by the
 learned *Bingham* [*Antiqu.*
 lib. iii. c. 4. § 5.]

“ out Devils, for the benefit of mankind ; and
 “ that he left behind him a receipt of those
 “ charms and exorcisms, by which he used to
 “ drive them out : which same method was the
 “ most effectual even to his time. For I saw,
 “ says he, one of my countrymen, *Eleazar*, cast-
 “ ing out Devils, in the presence of *Vespasian*,
 “ his sons and officers, and a multitude of sol-
 “ diers. His method was this : he applied to
 “ the nose of a person possessed a ring, which
 “ had a certain drug or root under the seal of it,
 “ which *Solomon* had prescribed ; and so, by
 “ the smell of the ring, he drew out the Devil,
 “ through the nostrils of the patient ; who fell
 “ presently to the ground : upon which, he ad-
 “ jured the Devil never to return, rehearsing the
 “ name of *Solomon*, with certain charms, which
 “ he had composed and left behind him ; and
 “ being desirous to convince the company, that
 “ he was really indued with this power, to which
 “ he pretended, he placed a certain cup or vessel
 “ filled with water, at a little distance from the
 “ person possessed, and commanded the Devil,
 “ as he was going out of him, to overturn the
 “ cup, so as to give the spectators a manifest
 “ proof, that he had quitted the body of the
 “ man [1].” Which shews, in contradiction
 to what *Justin Martyr* affirmed above, that be-
 sides the name of *Jesus*, the Devils were subject
 likewise to that of *Solomon*.

[1] Καὶ αὐτὴ μέχρι νῦν παρ’ ἡμῶν ἡ Θεραπεία πλεῖστον ἰσχύει, ἐφό-
 ρησα γάρ τινα Ἐλεάζαρον, &c. *Antiq. Jud.* l. viii. c. ii. § 5.

Now it will be granted, I suppose, by all men of sense, that these *Jewish* and Gentile Exorcists were mere Knaves and Impostors; who, by their tricks and false miracles, contrived to delude the credulous multitude, in order to acquire gain or power to themselves, and to keep their people firm to the *Jewish* or Heathenish rites, in opposition to the Christian. *Ulpian* the lawyer speaks of *Exorcism* in general, as a term of art used by Impostors: by whom he is supposed by some, to mean the *Jewish*, by others, the *Christian Exorcists* [1]. But *Tertullian*, and all the Fathers in general, declare, that these Magicians and wandering Jugglers performed many wonderful things, above the force of human power, which they wholly ascribe to the assistance of Dæmons. And if they were so far deluded by those *Jewish* and Gentile pretenders, as to take such senseless charms, and tricks of legerdemain, for the effects of a supernatural power, their prejudices would operate much more strongly in favor of their own Impostors, who had taken up the same trade: or if they saw through the cheat of the Gentile practitioners, yet on account of the credit which they had gained with the people, and the difficulty of detecting the fraud, they might think it convenient, perhaps, to oppose one cheat to another, and set up rival powers of their own, in opposition to those of their adversaries, in hopes of beating them at their own weapons.

[1] Bingham. Antiqu. B. v. c. 4. § 3.

For it is very hard to believe what *Origen* declares above, that the Devils, for the sake of doing the greater mischief to men, *used to possess and destroy their cattel*. In confirmation of which, *St. Jerom* has related a most ridiculous story, in his life of *St. Hilarion* the Monk: where, after a narrative of many cases of Devils, expelled by that saint from the bodies of men, he adds, “ but
 “ it is to little purpose to talk of men; brute
 “ animals also were dayly brought to him, mad
 “ or possessed: among the rest, a *Bactrian Camel*, of an enormous size, which had already
 “ destroyed many people: above thirty men
 “ were employed to drag him along with the
 “ strongest ropes. His eyes were bloody; his
 “ mouth foaming; his tongue rolling and
 “ swoln; and his strange roaring above all ter-
 “ rors: the old man ordered it to be let loose:
 “ upon which all who were about him ran away
 “ immediately: the saint came forward alone,
 “ and in the *Syriac* tongue, said, *Thou dost not af-*
 “ *fright me, Devil, with all that bulk of body:*
 “ *thou art one and the same in a little fox, or in a*
 “ *camel:* and so he stood firm with his arm
 “ stretched out; and as the beast advanced to-
 “ wards him, furious and ready to devour him,
 “ it presently fell down with its head to the
 “ ground; so that all present were amazed at
 “ the sudden change, from so great a fierceness to
 “ such a tameness. Upon which the old man took
 “ occasion to teach them, that the Devil used to
 “ seize cattel, out of his hatred to men, to whom
 “ he

“ he bore so great a grudge, as to wish, not only that they, but that all which they had, might perish.” To this story I cannot forbear adding, what is likewise affirmed by the same *Jerom*, of the same *Hilarion*; that *he was so full of the power of the Holy Spirit, as to be able to discover, from the smell of the bodies and the cloaths of men, or of any thing else, which they had but touched, to what particular Dæmon, or to what vice, they were severally subject.* Now though this good Father invokes *the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in his attempt to describe a life so wonderful*, yet all, who read it, must needs be persuaded, that out of his zeal and warm affection to the Monkish Order, which he professed, and from a desire to advance its credit in the world, he either wholly invented, or at least wilfully propagated all these extravagant tales, which he himself could not possibly believe: “ The time, says he, would fail me, if I should attempt to relate all the wonderful works that were performed by him—wherefore, by the influence of his example, *innumerable Monasteries began to be founded through all Palestine*; and all the Monks ran eagerly to *Hilarion*,” &c [1]. This was the real purpose of *St. Jerom’s* zeal; this the fruit of his fictitious miracles. But to re-

[1] Vid. Oper. Tom. iv. Exemplo itaque ejus innumera-
par. ii. p. 82, 83, &c. rabilia Monasteria per totam

Tempus me deficiet, si vo- Palæstinam esse cœperunt, &
luero univèrsa signa, quæ ab ad eum omnes Monachi cer-
eo perpetrata sunt, dicere.— tatim currere, &c.

turn to the *Dæmoniaks*. Since this gift of casting out Devils is what the Fathers, as I have said above, lay the greatest stress upon, and to which they make the most frequent appeals, it may be proper to strengthen what I have already been declaring upon it, by a few particular observations, which I would recommend to the attention of the reader.

1st, That there is such an uniformity in all the primitive accounts of them, though given by different Fathers and in different ages, *of the Devils being scourged, burned, and tortured by the Christian Exorcists; and of their howlings, discourses, and confessions*, that they all seem to have been cast in the same mould; and to have been the copies rather of one original story, transcribed by the later writers from the earlier, than the natural descriptions of what each of them had severally seen, at different times, and in distant places [1].

2^{dly}, That the persons thus possessed, and in whom the Devils used to hold Discourses, were called, by the primitive Christians, *Ἐγασσεμύθοι*, or *Ventriloquists*; because they were believed to *speak out of the belly through the navel* [2]. Thus in a book ascribed to *Justin Martyr*, containing

[1] See what I have collected above on this subject, from *Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Cyprian, and Lactantius*. Thus Mr. *Whiston* also observes, *that a good deal of what is said upon it by Minu-*

cius Felix, is made use of by Cyprian, soon after his time, and that almost verbatim. Account of the *Dæmoniaks*, p. 42.

[2] See *Bing. Antiq.* l. xvi. c. 5. § 4.

a number of *Quæstions*, with answers to them, for the use of the *Orthodox*, one of the *Quæstions* is this; “ If all the arts of delusion are abolish-
“ ed by the coming of Christ, how comes it to
“ pass, that *Dæmons* still speak by those, who
“ are called *Ventriloquists*, and that they do not
“ make Christianity ridiculous and contempti-
“ ble, by shewing forth the works of imposture,
“ and uttering oracular prædictions in the bodies
“ of Christians [1] ?”

Now many of us have seen, and may still see perhaps at this day, a sort of these *Ventriloquists*, who, by a particular formation of their organs, managed by art and practice, could speak in such a manner, as to persuade the company, that the voice did not proceed from them, but from some invisible being : which they could direct likewise so, as to make it seem to come from what part of the room they pleased : by which means, weak and ignorant people have been terrified almost out of their senses, believing it to be the *voice of a Spirit or Dæmon*. If we suppose then, that there were any Artists of this kind among those ancient Christians, as there undoubtedly were among the ancient Gentiles, it is easy to imagine, what strange and surprising feats might be performed, by a correspondence between the *Ventriloquist* and the *Exorcist*, so as to delude the most sensible and sagacious of their audience, prepossessed with the belief of these diabolical possessions, and void of

[1] Vid. *Quæst. & Responf. ad Orthodox. Quæst. 8.*

all fufpicion, that fuch effects could poffibly be produced by any human art or natural caufe.

3dly, From the testimony of Antiquity itfelf it is evident, that many of their Dæmoniacs could not poffibly be cured by all the power of the Exorcifts; and that the cures, which are pretended to have been wrought on any, were but temporary, and appear to have been the ceffation rather of a particular fit, or accefs of the diftemper, than the real expulftion of a Dæmon. This may be clearly collected from the method of treating them in the primitive Church, as it was regulated by feveral Canons and rules, made for that purpofe by Bifhops and Councils, injoining, “ that they fhould not be received to
 “ baptifm, but in the intervals of their diforder;
 “ nor to the Communion, unlefs they fhewed
 “ figns of piety and fobriety, fo as not to expofe
 “ and blaſpheme the myfteries; in which caſe
 “ they might communicate now and then: that
 “ they fhould never be ordained, or taken into
 “ any order of the Clergy; nor allowed to pray
 “ in common with the congregation; but be
 “ produced always ſeparately, and commanded
 “ onely to bow down their heads, while the reft
 “ of the aſſembly were offering up a prayer for
 “ them.” In different Churches, however, a different difcipline was obſerved with regard to them; for in ſome they were admitted to baptifm, and even to dayly communion; by which means many are affirmed to have been relieved, when all the arts of the Exorcifts had been tried
 upon

upon them in vain [1]. Now these cases manifestly shew, that this celebrated gift, as it was managed by the primitive Church, was not able to work an absolute cure; or to drive out the Devils so effectually, as to reduce the patients to a permanent state of sanity: so as to render them ordinarily capable, either of baptism, or the Eucharist, or of joining even with the congregation, in the daily prayers of the Church. Whence we may reasonably conclude, that it was nothing else, but a false mimickry of that genuin power, which was exercised by our Lord, and conferred afterwards on his Apostles: a power which never did it's work by halves, or left it's cures imperfect. For, as we learn from the Gospel, *Mary Magdalen*, from whom *seven Devils* were cast out, continued ever after in her sober senses; accompanying and ministring on all occasions to our Lord, to the time of his death: and the man also, out of whom a *Legion* of them was ejected, was restored at once to perfect health both of mind and body, and sent away to proclaim in *Decapolis*, and the neighbouring country, the miraculous cure which *Jesus* had wrought upon him [2].

4thly, There is another circumstance belonging to these primitive Dæmoniacs, of which the reader perhaps may desire some farther explication; I mean the great numbers of them, which

[1] See Bing. Antiq. book c. v. § III, &c.

XI. c. v. § III. it. ibid. book [2] Luke viii. 2. Matt v. xv. c. iv § xv. it. ib. xvii. 20. Luke viii. 39.

appear to have subsisted in those early ages : whose chief habitation was within a part of the Church, allotted to them for that purpose ; in which, as in a kind of Hospital, they were committed to the care of the exorcists : whose business it was, “ to pray over them on some occasions, and to provide their dayly food, and keep them employed in some bodily exercise and innocent business, of sweeping the Church and the like, to prevent the more violent agitations of Satan, and lest he should be tempted by their idleness to renew his attacks upon them [1].” Which method of relieving so miserable a tribe of helpless mortals, will account for the numbers, with which the Churches were stored ; as well as for the confidence of those challenges, made to the Heathens, by the Christian Apologists, to come and see at any hour, and any warning, how they could *torment, and lash, and burn, and drive the evil spirits* out of them : while they kept such numbers of them in constant pay, always ready for the shew ; tried and disciplined by their Exorcists, to an habit of groaning and howling, and to give proper answers to all quæstions which should be demanded of them.

It is observable also, in the last place, that this power of *exorcising Dæmoniacs, or casting out Devils*, which had hitherto been in the hands onely of the meaner sort of the Christian layety, was put under the direction of the Clergy, by the

[1] Bing. book III. c. iv. § VII.

Council of Laodicea, about the year of Christ three hundred and sixty seven, in which it was decreed, that *none should be Exorcists, but those who were appointed by the Bishop*. After which appropriation of it, as Mr. *Whiston* informs us, “few or none of the Clergy, nor indeed of the Layety, were any longer able to cast out Devils: so that the old Christian exorcism, or prayer for the *Energumens* in the Church, began soon after to be omitted as wholly useless [1].” Which sudden failure of so eminent a gift seems to be ascribed by him to that fatal step of this *unhappy Council*, as he calls it; as if, by their presumptuous attempt to controul the divine power, they had provoked God to withdraw it. But though this solution of the case may be agreeable to the character and principles of that very learned and pious writer, yet it is more agreeable to reason, and the experience of mankind, to suppose, that the licentious abuse of this imaginary power, by the many false and impudent pretensions, of crafty impostors on the one hand, and wrong-headed Enthusiasts on the other, had brought such scandal on Christianity itself, that the Clergy were forced at last to interpose, and take the affair into their own hands. For that this was really the case, is manifestly shewn by the event: since the exercise of this gift was no sooner subjected to any regulation, even by those who favored and

[1] See Mr. *Whiston's* Account of *Dæmoniacks*, p. 53.

desired to support it, than it gradually decreased and expired.

§ 4. The next miraculous gift ascribed to the primitive Church, is that of *Prophetic visions, and extatic trances, and the discovery of men's hearts*: for these seem to be the fruit of one and the same spirit: which exerted itself chiefly about the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, through *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days. “The divine censure, says *Cyprian*, does not cease to chastise us, neither by night nor by day; for besides nightly visions, even boys among us are filled with the Holy Ghost, and, in fits of extasy, see, hear, and utter things, by which the Lord thinks fit to admonish and instruct us [1].” This ecstacy was a temporary madness, or loss of senses, and is called by *Tertullian*, *the spiritual virtue, in which Prophecy consists* [2]. *Suidas* says, that of all the kinds of fury or madness, that of the Poets and Prophets was alone to be wished for [3].

[1] Castigare nos itaque divina censura nec noctibus desinit nec diebus. Præter nocturnas enim visiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu sancto puerorum innocens ætas, quæ in extasi videt, & audit, & loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus monere, & instruere dignatur. Epist.

ad Cler. ix. p. 22. Ed. Nic. Rigalt.

[2] Quum in illum Deus amentiam immisit, spiritualementiam vim, qua constat prophetia. De Anim. c. 21. it. 24.

[3] Τῶν μανῶν—αἱ δὲ αἰεταὶ καὶ ἐν ἡμέρῃ αἰεταί, ὡς τῶν ποιητῶν καὶ τῶν χρησμολόγων. in voce *Mania*.

Mr.

Mr. *Dodwell* observes, “ that visions were peculiar to the young, dreams to the old : because it required a great strength of body to support the violence of such divine agitations [1].” *Philo* the Jew, treating of the same ecstasies, with which the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament used to be affected, reasons thus : “ The human mind, says he, is symbolically called the Sun by *Moses*—while our mind therefore shines, and exerts itself within us, spreading, as it were, a meridian light through the Soul, we are then in our right senses, without any divine influx : but when the mind goes down, then a divine ecstasy and prophetic madasess fall upon us : for when the divine light shines, the human sets : and when that sets, this again rises ; and this is what usually happens to the prophetic race : for the mind is driven out of us, when the divine spirit comes in ; and when this again quits us, the other returns ; for it is not fit, that mortal should cohabit with immortal [2].”

From these testimonies we may collect, that the Prophecy of the Primitive Church by *visions*

[1] Plane senibus ita somnia aptantur, ut Juvenibus Visiones. Vehemens nimirum illa humorum agitatio non erat nisi in ætatis vigore toleranda, &c. Vid. Dissert. Cyprian. iv. § 40.

[2] Ἡλίου δὲ διὰ συμβόλου τὸ ἡμέτερον εἶναι καλεῖται—&c.

μὲν γὰρ φῶς ἐπιλάμβανει τὸ θεῖον, εὐρίκει τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, ἕτε δ' ἐκείνη δύναμις τὸ εὐρίκει καὶ ἀνιάλλει. τῷ δὲ προφητικῷ γίνεται φιλεῖ τὸ συμβεβαῖον. — δέμις γὰρ ἐκείνη, δυνάμις ἀθανάτων συνικησάται. &c. Philo. Quis Divinor. Her. Oper. Tom. i. p 511. Edit. Lond. 1742.

or *ecstasy*, was of the same kind, as to its outward appearance, with *that divination by fury*, as it was called among the Gentiles, which was practised by the *Delphic Pythia*, and *Cumæan Sibyl*, when agitated by the pretended power and instinct of the God [1]. Of which *Cicero* says, in way of raillery, “ what authority can that
 “ madness have, which you call divine ; that a
 “ wise man should not be able to foresee, what
 “ a madman can ; and that he, who has lost all
 “ human senses, should presently acquire divine
 “ ones [2].”

Montanus the Heretic, and his female Associates, seem to have been the Authors of these prophetic trances, towards the end of the second century ; and acquired great credit by their *visions and ecstasies*, in which they acted their part so well, by feigned distortions and convulsive agitations of the body, as to appear to be out of their senses ; and in those fits uttered many wild prophecies and prædictions, which they imposed upon the people for divine revelations ; and by affecting at the same time

[1] Inest igitur inanimis præflagitio—ea si exarsit acrius, furor appellatur, quum a corpore animus abstractus divino instinctu concitatur. Cic. de Div. 1. 31.

——ca fræna furenti
 Concutit, et stimulos sub pectore vertit Apollo.

Ut primum cessit furor, & rabida ora quierunt.

Virg. Æn. vi. 102.

[2] Quid vero auctoritatis habet furor iste, quem divinum vocatis, ut quæ sapiens non videat, ea videat infanus ; & is, qui humanos sensus amiserit, divinos adsecutus sit ? De Div. 11. 54.

a pecu-

a peculiar sanctity and severity of discipline, gathered a great number of disciples [1], who first raised and propagated that spirit of enthusiasm in the Church, which subsisted in it for near a century, under the title of *vision and prophecy*, and then gradually sunk into utter contempt.

Tertullian, a writer of this enthusiastic turn, severe in his manners, and stiff in his opinions, wrote with great vehemence against Plays and Shews: in which, as we have seen above, he made great use of visions, towards enforcing his argument. He wrote another book to prove, *that it was a Sin for a Soldier, to wear a garland or crown on any occasion, and that a Christian should rather suffer martyrdom than submit to it* [2]: and in a third book he affirms it to be rank idolatry, *to deck their doors with garlands or flowers, on Festival days, according to the custom of the Heathens*: “and calls the name of God to witness, that he
“knew a person, who had been grievously cha-
“stised in a vision, because his servants, even
“without his knowledge and in his absence,
“had crowned the door with flowers, on some
“occasion of public joy [3].” He wrote a treatise likewise, to prove the soul of man to be *corporeal and of human shape*: and for the truth of his opinion, appeals to his extatic maid above-

[1] Vid. Cave's Hist. litt. Vol. i. p. 74. it. Jo. Cleric. Hist. Eccles. ad Ann. CLVII.

[2] Vid. lib. de Corona.

[3] Ex auctoritate quoque Dei confessor — scio fratrem

per visionem eadem nocte castigatum graviter, quod januam ejus subito, annuntiatis gaudiis publicis, servi coronassent, &c. De Idololat. 15.

mentioned, of whom he tells this story: that, “as he happened to be discoursing on the nature of the soul, she fell into one of her trances: and as soon as the service was over, and the people dismissed, she came, as usual, to relate to him what she had seen; which was always carefully taken down in writing, in order to be examined: when she declared, that there was shewn to her, among other things, an human soul in bodily form; yet so, as to appear to be a spirit: not of a void and empty quality, but what might even be handled, tender and lucid, of an airy color, and in all points of human shape [1].” Which wild dream of a frantic, or fiction rather of a silly woman, this Father applies as the testimony of God himself, to evince the certainty of his opinion. Lastly, in another book, written to prove, that women ought always *to wear a veil*, he declares, *that God, in a vision to a certain sister, had prescribed to her, by a special revelation, the exact length and measure of the veil* [2].”

Now it is easy to imagine, how *Tertullian* might be imposed upon by the craft of these extatic visionaries; and by the warmth of his tem-

[1] Forte nescio quid de anima differabamus, cum ea foror in Spiritu esset. Post transacta seculonia, dimissa plebe—inter cetera, inquit, ostensa est mihi anima corporaliter, &c. Hoc visio, & Deus testis, & Apostolus Charis-

matum in Ecclesia futurorum Sponsor.—De Anima, c. ix.

[2] Nobis Dominus etiam revelationibus, velaminis spatia metatus est. Nam cuidam Sorori nostrae Angelus in Somnis, &c. De Virgin. Veland. 17.

per and force of his prejudices, be drawn to espouse any delusion, that flattered his particular zeal and favorite opinions. But it is difficult to account for the same conduct in his scholar *Cyprian*; a man of a more acute head, and sober mind; but fond of power and Episcopal Authority; whose character would tempt us to suspect that he was the inventor, rather than the believer of such idle stories; and the director, rather than the dupe of such senseless visionaries. Yet in all questionable points of doctrine or discipline, which he had a mind to introduce into the Christian worship, we find him constantly appealing to the testimony of *heavenly visions and divine revelations*. It is certain, says Mr. *Dodwell*, that all things of great moment, which related to the public state of the Church, were foretold to him in visions [1]. For instance, in a letter to *Cæcilius*, he declares, that he had received a divine admonition, to mix water with wine in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in order to render it effectual [2]. In another to the Clergy, con-

[1] Adeo familiares *Cypriano* erant hujusmodi visiones, ut disciplinæ etiam Ecclesiasticæ exercitio illas acceperit, aliasque deinceps expectaret, &c. *Dissert. Cyprian. iv. § 20.*

Ita constat gravioris momenti omnia, quæ quidem publicum Ecclesiæ statum attinerent, esse illiusmodi visionibus prædicta. *Ibid. § 21.*

[2] Nec nos putes, frater

carissime, nostra et humana conscribere, aut ultronea voluntate hoc nobis audacter assumere.—Sed quando aliquid Deo aspirante & mandante præcipitur, necesse est Domino servus fidelis obtemperet—admonitos autem nos scias, ut calix, qui in commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino offeratur, &c. *Epist. LXIII.*

cerning certain Priests, who had restored some lapsed Christians too hastily to the Communion of the Church, he threatens them, to execute, *what he was ordered to do against them, in a vision, if they did not desist* [1]. He makes the same threat to one *Pupianus*, who had spoken ill of him, and withdrawn himself from his communion [2]: where his Editor *Rigaltius* makes this remark, “that the argument of visions and
“divine revelations, which *Cyprian* so frequently uses, is a weapon of great force in the hands
“of so good a man; otherwise a vain and contemptible one, since crafty Sophists might
“easily invent such visions, in favor of any
“cause, to delude the simple and unwary [3].”

In a letter likewise to the Clergy and the People, *Cyprian* tells them, “how he had been
“admonished and directed by God, to ordain
“one *Numidicus* a Priest; who, by his persuasive exhortations, had sent a large number of
“Martyrs before him to the other world, either
“stoned or burnt to death; and beheld even
“with joy, the wife of his bosom burnt together with the rest; being himself also left

[1] Quoniam si ultra in
iisdem perseveraverint, ut
ea admonitione, qua me Do-
minus uti jubet. — Ep. ix. p.
12.

[2] Epist. lxxix. p 118.
Memini enim quid mihi o-
stensum sit, &c.

[3] Hic etiam (*Cyprianus*)
vitur offensionibus & visio-

nibus; telo, ad conterendos
adversarios, in manu præfer-
tim *Cypriani*, viri optimi atque
divini, valentissimo; alias va-
no ac futili. Nam & callidus
Rhetor & Sophista vaser hu-
jusmodi visa ad causam suam
appositissima, poterit commi-
nisci, & fallere incautos &
simplices. Rigalt. Not ibid:

“for

“ for dead, half burnt, and buried in stones, till
 “ he was found scarce alive, and carried off by
 “ the piety of his daughter, and so restored to
 “ the world against his will. But the Lord had
 “ now signified the cause of it; that he might
 “ add him to the Priesthood of his Church [1].”

In another letter he recommends to them one *Celerinus*, whom he had ordained a lecturer: *whose modesty, he says, had been over-ruled and compelled by a divine vision, to accept that office* [2]. Where *Rigaltius* once more reflects, *on the great diligence of Cyprian, in making such use of visions* [3]. But *Cyprien* himself suggests the reason of it, in the Epistle immediately preceding, addressed likewise to the Clergy and the people, concerning one *Aurelius*, whom he had ordained a lecturer, by a *divine admonition*, without calling them together and consulting with them in common, concerning the character and merit of the Candidate, as it was the custom of those days in all *Clerical ordinations*; for which he ex-

[1] Nam admonitos nos & instructus sciatis dignatione divina ut *Numidicus* Presbyter ascribatur—qui hortatu suo copiosum Martyrum numerum, lapidibus & flammis necatum ante se misit: quique uxorem adherentem lateri suo, concrematam simul cum cæteris—lætes aspexit. Ipse semiustulatus & lapidibus obrutus, & pro mortuo derelictus,—remansit invitus, sed

remanendi, ut videmus, hæc fuit causa, ut eum Clero nostro Dominus adjungeret. Ep. xxxv.

[2] Referimus ad vos *Celerinum*.—Clero nostro non humana suffragatione sed divina dignatione conjunctum, &c. Ep. xxxiv.

[3] Notanda hic etiam est industria *Cypriani*, visionum efficacia tam suaviter utentis. Not. b. ibid.

cuses himself by saying, that there was no occasion, in the present case, *to wait for human testimonies, when the divine suffrage had already been signified* [1]. This then seems to be the meaning of *Cyprian's diligence in the use of visions*, that whenever he thought fit to exert his Episcopal authority, *without the previous consent of his Clergy and people*, he might obviate their murmurs, by alledging a divine command for it.

But the most memorable effect of any of his visions was his flight and retreat, when he withdrew himself from his Church, in the time of persecution. A step which gave great scandal, and seems to have been considered by the Clergy of *Rome*, in a public letter written upon the subject of it, to the Clergy of *Carthage*, as a desertion of his post and pastoral duty [2]. So that it is no wonder to find *Cyprian* himself, as well as his Apologist *Pontius*, the writer of his Life, so solicitous to excuse it. “ There is no doubt, “ says *Rigaltius*, but that the severity of his master *Tertullian*, who wrote a book against all “ flight in time of persecution, raised such scruples and shame in the mind of *Cyprian*, as “ made him labour hard to wipe off that disgrace; as the pains and perplexity of his Ad-

[1] In ordinationibus Clericis, Fratres carissimi, sollemus vos ante consulere, & mores ac merita singulorum communi consilio ponderare,

sed expectanda non sunt testimonia humana, cum præcedunt divina suffragia, &c. Ep. xxxiii.

[2] Vid. *Cyprian. Epist. ii.*

“ vocate

“ vocate *Pontius* likewise shew [1].” They both of them therefore affirm, “ That he was commanded to retire, *by a special revelation from Heaven*: and that his flight was not the effect of any other fear, but that of offending God: and that his mind, wholly devoted and subservient to the admonitions of God, was persuaded, that if he had not obeyed the Lord, when he commanded him to retreat, he should sin even by suffering martyrdom [2].” Yet this plea was nothing else, without doubt, but a mere fiction, contrived for the purpose of quieting the scandal that was raised by his flight, and is in effect confuted by himself in another letter to the Clergy, in which he declares, “ That it was the advice and authority of one *Tertullus*, which prevailed with him to withdraw himself from a place, where his life was so much

[1] Secessus iste Cypriani fugæ probro minime caruit, —nec dubito quin ipsa tanti Magistri severitas discipuli mentem adeo suffuderit, vel aliquo saltem scrupulo sic pupugerit, ut fugæ suspicionem Cyprianus abs se amoliri magno studio contenderet. Hoc & Pontii familiaris sui satis intricata sedulitas ostendit, ipsiusque Cypriani Epistolæ sequentes declarant. Et si verum amamus, haud aliud magis ista Romani Cleri tam argumentosa quam incondita commonitio proferibit. Ri-

galt. *ibid.* Not. b.

[2] Et audietis omnia quando ad vos reducem me Dominus fecerit, qui, *ut secederem*, iussit. *Epist.* 1x. p. 22.

Fuit vero formido illa, sed iusta; formido, quæ Dominum timeret offendere. Formido, quæ præceptis Dei mallet obsequi, quam sic coronari. Dicata enim in omnibus Deo mens, & fides divinis admonitionibus mancipata, credit se, nisi Domino latebram tunc jubenti paruisset, etiam ipsa passione peccare. *Cypr. Vit.* per Pontium, p. 13.

P +

“ sought

“ fought for : wherefore he desires them to perform all the functions of his office for him during his retreat, since their persons were not exposed to so much envy and danger as his would be [1].”

Dionysius, Bishop of *Alexandria*, who lived in the same age, has left the same story likewise concerning himself, and swears to the truth of it : that in the time of a persecution, he was commanded by God, in a vision, to retire from *Alexandria*, and was wonderfully preserved and guarded by him in his retreat [2]. *And shall we not believe a most holy Bishop*, says Mr. *Dodswell*, even upon his oath [3] ? The same *Dionysius* affirms likewise, that he had another vision upon the subject of reading *Heretical books*, about which he had some scruples, till a voice from Heaven expressly enjoined him, to read them all without reserve, because he was able to examine and confute

[1] A *Tertullo*, fratre nostro carissimo, ratio reddetur : qui pro cetera sua cura, quam impendens divinis operibus impertit, etiam hujus consilii auctor fuit, ut cunctus & moderatus existerem, nec me in conspectum publicum, & maxime ejus loci, ubi toties flagitatus & quaesitus fuissim, temere committerem. Fretus ergo & dilectione & religione vestra, his literis & hortor & mando, ut vos quorum mini-

me illic invidiosa & non adeo periculosa praesentia est, vice mea fungamini, &c. Ep. v. p. 13.

[2] Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ λαλῶ, καὶ αὐτὸς εἶδεν ὅτι ἐψευδομαί, ἑθελμιαν ἐπὶ ἑμαυτοῦ βαλλόμενος, εἰς ἀθεσίαν ποιεῖσθαι τὴν φωνήν. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. vi. c. 40.

[3] Quid hic faciemus ? Viro Sanctissimo ne jurato quidem credemus ? Dissert. Cyprian. iv. § 17.

them.

them [1]. This reminds me of a vision also which St. *Jerom* declares to have been given to himself, about a century after ; in which he was dragged to the Tribunal of Christ, and terribly threatened, and even scourged, for the grievous sin of reading secular and prophane writers, Cicero, Virgil, and Horace ; whom, for that reason, he resolved never to take into his hands any more : upon which *Ruffinus* rallies him with great spirit and smartness, for inventing and publishing so silly a lie [2]. And it must needs be thought strange, that God should injoin contrarieties to his Saints and Servants ; should command one *Father* to read *Heretical books*, because he was able to confute them, yet forbid it afterwards to another, who was full as able, to confute them, as his Predecessor. But if *Jerom's* vision deserved to be treated by his contemporaries as a fiction, I see no reason, either from the nature of the thing, or the use which is made of it, or the characters of the persons concerned, why the visions of *Cyprian* and *Dionysius*, should not merit the same treatment.

[1] Ὁραμα θεόπεμπτον ἐπέξ-
 ἔωσέ με, καὶ λόγῳ πρὸς με γενέ-
 μινθ, προσέταξε διαρρήδην λέ-
 γων, πᾶσιν ἐπιύγγαιε εἰς αὐ εἰς
 χεῖρας λάθοις· διευθέειν γὰρ
 ἕκατα καὶ δεκμαζέειν ἱκανὸς εἶ.
 Euseb. Hist. vii. 7.

[2] Ostendam apud ipsam
 (*Hieronymum*) tam licita ha-
 beri perjuria, ut in scriptis
 quoque suis deprehendi ea

non erubescat. — Et cetera
 cum dixisset ejusmodi, quibus
 alienam esse a Christiano asse-
 reret librorum secularium
 lectionem, inferit etiam reve-
 lationem quandam ad se divi-
 nitus factum, &c. *Rufin. adv.*
Hieron. Vid. Oper. Hieron.
Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 414. E-
dit. Benedict.

But

But how credible soever these visions might appear to the generality of Christians in those days, yet there were many at the same time, as *Cyprian* himself confesses, who contemned and made a jest of them all, as mere illusions and impertinent fancies: but they were a sort of men, he says, *who would sooner believe any thing against a Priest, than believe a Priest* [1].

In one of the Dialogues, commonly ascribed to *Lucian*, the Christians seem to be ridiculed, on the account of their *fasting and watching whole nights in hymns and prayers, as if they could infuse by that means, what sort of dreams or visions they thought fit* [2]. Now there is a passage so applicable to this remark, in the ancient narrative of the Martyrdom of *St. Ignatius*, as to make us almost imagine, that the author had alluded to it. The narrative was drawn up by persons who had accompanied the Martyr from *Asia* to *Rome*, whose thoughts, for several months past, had been employed on nothing else but the subject of his Martyrdom, and it concludes thus: “ These things were done on the 13th of the
“ kalends of *January*; *Sura* and *Synecius* being
“ the second time Consuls of *Rome*; of which
“ we ourselves are eye-witnesses. And the night

[1] *Quamquam sciam somnia ridicula, & visiones ineptas quibusdam videri; sed utique illis, qui malant contra sacerdotes credere, quam sacerdoti.* Ep. lxxviii. p. 118.

[2] “*Ἐλεγον γὰρ εἰλίαις δέκα ἄλλοι διαμενόμεν, ἢ ἐπὶ πανύχνη ἰμνωθίας παρρυπνέει, ἀειζώομεν τὰ τοιαῦτα.*—*Philopatris*, vers. fin.

“ following,

“ following, as we were watching with tears in
“ the house, and praying to God with bended
“ knees, that he would impart to us weak men,
“ some assurance of what was done [with regard
“ to the Martyr] it happened, that falling into
“ a slumber, some of us, on a sudden, saw the
“ blessed *Ignatius* standing before us and em-
“ bracing us ; others beheld the blessed Martyr
“ praying for us ; others, as it were dropping
“ with sweat, as if just come from his great la-
“ bor, and standing by the Lord ; which when
“ we saw, being filled with joy, and comparing
“ the visions of our dreams with each other, we
“ glorified God the giver of all good, and being
“ assured of the blessedness of the Saint, we have
“ made known unto you, both the day and the
“ time, that being assembled together, accord-
“ ing to the time of his Martyrdom, we may
“ communicate with the combatant and most
“ valiant Martyr of Christ [1].”

But to declare freely what I think : whatever ground there might be in those primitive ages, either to reject or to allow the authority of those visions, yet from all the accounts of them, that remain to us in these days, there seems to be the greatest reason to suspect, that they were all contrived, or authorized at least, by the leading men of the Church, for the sake of moderating and governing with more ease, the unruly spirit of the populace, in those times of danger and

[1] Vid. Coteler. Patr. Apostol. Vol. ii. Martyr. S. Ignat. & VII. p. 161. See also Archbishop Wake's Translation.

difficulty.

difficulty. For they are generally applied, to excuse the conduct of particular persons, in some instances of it liable to censure; or to enforce some particular doctrine or discipline, warmly pressed by some, and not well relished by others, or to confirm things not onely trifling and frivolous, but sometimes even superstitious, and hurtful to true religion.

I have already observed, that it was the Heretic *Montanus*, who first gave a vogue to *prophetic visions and ecstasies*, in the primitive Church. But when his pretensions came afterwards to be suspected and decried, it is remarkable, that those who undertook to expose and confute them, employed such arguments against his prophecy, as seemed to shake the credit of all prophecy. For whereas the *Montanists* delivered their prophecies always in *ecstasy*, or with loss of senses; it was then urged against them, “ that this was the proof of a Diabolical spirit; “ that the true Prophets never had such fits; “ never lost their senses; but calmly and sedately received and understood whatever was revealed to them.” And *Epiphanius* makes this the very criterion, or distinguishing character between a true and false prophet; *that the true had no ecstasies, constantly retained his senses, and, with firmness of mind, apprehended and uttered the divine oracles* [1]. St. *Jerom* also declares, *that*

[1] Ὅτι οὐ γὰρ ἐν χιῶν, ἐν ὁσὶ τῷ, οἱ ἀπὸ τῶ ἀγίου τοῦ πνεύματος
 πρὸς τὸν, ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ συνεπαί, πρὸς οὐρανὸν, &c. Adv. Hæ-
 res. 48. c. 1. T. i. § III. p. 404.
 the

the true Prophets never spake in ecstasy, or madness of heart, like Montanus and his mad women, Prisca, and Maximilla, but understood what they delivered, and could speak or hold their tongues, whenever they pleased, which those, who spake in ecstasy, could not do [1]. Eusebius also mentions a book of one Miltiades, written against Montanus, the purpose of which was, to prove, that a Prophet ought not to speak in ecstasy [2]. Yet from the testimonies collected above, we have seen, that before the Montanists had brought those ecstasies into disgrace, the prophecy of the orthodox, as well as that of the Heretics, was declared to have been exerted in ecstasy. And it appears to have been the current opinion in those earlier days, that the Prophets also of the Old Testament received and uttered their revelations in ecstasy.

Athenagoras expressly affirms it, and says, “ that while they were under the divine impulse, “ they were transported out of their senses, and “ delivered in ecstasy what was inspired, being “ mere organs of the Holy Spirit, just as a pipe “ or flute is of him who blows into it [3].”

[1] Non enim loquitur (Propheta) in ἐκστασει, extasi, ut Montanus & Prisca Maximillaque delirant, sed quod prophetat, liber est visionis intelligentis universa quæ loquitur. Hier. Op. Vol. iii. p. 1559. Prolog. in Naum. Proph.

Qui autem in extasi, id est,

invitus loquitur, nec tacere nec loqui in sua potestate habet. Ibid. Prolog. in Abacuc. p. 1591.

[2] Ἐν ᾧ ἀποδεικνύουσιν περὶ τῆ μηδὲν προφήτην ἐν ἐκστασει λαλῶν. Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. 17.

[3] Οἱ καὶ ἔκτασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, λογισμῶν, κινήσειν αὐτῶς τῆ θεοῦ πνεύματι, ἀ ἐκ-

Justin Martyr speaks of them in the same strain, “ that the spirit of God descending from above, “ made use of them, as of an instrument, just “ as the quill strikes the harp or lyre, to revele “ to us the knowledge of divine and heavenly “ things [1].” *Tertullian* also declares, “ that “ he, who has the spirit within him, must neces- “ sarily be deprived of his senses, especially “ whenever he beholds the glory of God, or “ when God speaks by him, as being then over- “ shadowed by the divine power [2].”

Again, *Montanus's* Associate *Maximilla* gave out, that the gift of Prophecy was to cease with her, and no other Prophet to arise after her. In answer to which, the Orthodox asserted, that the true spirit of prophecy could never fail or cease in the Church, till the consummation of all things [3]. In which, as Mr. *Dodwell* owns, “ the Ancients “ argued rashly, and were mistaken in their no- “ tion of the perpetuity of prophecy: since *Eusebius*, who made it his business to explore and

γαῖλο ἐξεφάνησαν, ὡσεὶ κ' αὐλη-
τῆς αὐτὴν ἐμπροσθεῖσαι. Legat. pr.
Christian. p. 9. Edit. ad cal-
cem Oper. Just. Mart.

[1] “Ὁ αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον ἐξ ἑρα-
νῶ κατὴν ἀλλήλων, ὡσπερ ὄρ-
γάνῳ καθάρως τῆς ἡλίας τοῖς
δικαίοις ἀδράσει χρωμενον, τὴν
τῶν θεῶν ἡμῶν κ' ἑρατίων ἀπο-
καλύψη γαῖσιν. Cohort. ad
gent. p. 9. B.

[2] In spiritu enim homo
constitutus, præsertim quam

gloriam Dei conspicit, vel per
ipsum Deus loquitur, necesse
est, excidat sensu. — Adv.
Marcion. l. iv. p. 537.

[3] Φάσκει γὰρ ἡ παρ' αὐ-
τοῖς λεγόμενη Μαξιμίλλα ἡ προ-
φήτις;—μὲν ἰμὲ προφήτις ἐκτί-
ῆται, ἀλλὰ συνίληται, &c. Epi-
phan. Hæref. 48. § 2. Δεῖν
γὰρ εἶναι τὸ προφήτικον χάρισμα
ἐν πατρὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ μέχρι τῆς
τελείας παραστάσεως, ὃ ἀπόστολῶ-
ἀξιοῦ. Euseb. Hist. v. 17.

“ deduce

“ deduce the succession of those prophetic gifts,
“ intimates, that they were ceased and vanished
“ in his days [1]:” that is, about the middle
of the fourth century.

Since we are now considering the miracles of the *Cyprianic* age, I cannot forbear taking notice of two or three of those wonderful stories, which *Cyprian* himself attests, in that *magnificent treatise*, as it was called, concerning *the lapsed* Christians, who, in the time of persecution, had been induced, by the terrors of present death or tortures, to deny Christ, or offer incense to an Idol. “ There was a man, says he, who went up voluntarily to the Capitol, to deny the Lord ; “ and when he had denied him, was presently “ struck dumb.—A woman also, who, after her “ lapse, had the impudence to go to the baths, “ was there seized by an unclean spirit, and “ thrown to the ground, and with her teeth tore “ that tongue, with which she had been either “ talking or feeding impiously ; and so became “ her own executioner ; for she died not long after “ in great anguish and torments of her bowels.” He introduces the next story more solemnly, by declaring, that he himself was present and an eye-witness of it. “ Certain Parents, says he,

[1] Scio equidem libens- que concedo, in tota hac *de prophetiarum perpetuitate*, hallucinatos esse veteres. Dissert. Cypr. iv § 13.

Eusebius, qui hoc in sua hi-

storia notatu dignum duxerit, quousque *donorum prophetico- rum* successio permanavit, id sane innuit, suo jam tempore illam defecisse. Ibid. § 22.

“ too solicitous for their own safety, and flying
“ from persecution, left an infant daughter to
“ the care of a nurse, who carried it presently to
“ the Magistrates. These, being then assembled
“ with the people before an Idol, and seeing the
“ child not yet old enough to eat flesh, gave it a
“ piece of bread dipt in wine, being the remains
“ of what had been offered to the Idol. The
“ mother, ignorant of the fact, within a short
“ time after took her daughter home again ;
“ but the child was yet no more able to disco-
“ ver the crime committed, than she was before
“ to understand or to hinder it. The mother
“ brought her therefore to us at the Sacrament,
“ while we knew nothing of the matter. But
“ the child being now mingled with the Saints,
“ and impatient of the service and prayers, be-
“ gan to be seized, sometimes with fits of cry-
“ ing, sometimes with tortures of the mind,
“ and, as if it had been upon the rack, betray-
“ ed by all the signs which its tender age could
“ give, a sense of guilt and consciousness of the
“ fact. The service being ended, when the Dea-
“ con began to give the Cup to all present, and
“ it came to the child’s turn, the little one, by
“ divine instinct, turned away its face, held its
“ lips close shut, and refused the cup : the Dea-
“ con persisted, and poured a little down its
“ throat, though by force : upon this, convul-
“ sions and vomitings ensued ; the Eucharist
“ could not stay in a body and mouth so de-
“ filed : the consecrated potion of the Lord’s
“ blood

“ blood burst out of its polluted bowels : so
“ great is the power, so great the majesty of
“ the Lord : the secrets of darkness are detect-
“ ed by its light : nor could hidden crimes be
“ concealed from the Priest of God : for this
“ happened to an infant, which was not yet of
“ age to speak, or tell the crimes which others
“ had committed upon it. There was another
“ woman, says *Cyprian*, who, after she had tak-
“ en the Sacrament with us unobserved, was
“ instantly seized with pains and torments, and
“ fell down convulsed and trembling, as if she
“ had swallowed a sword or deadly poison : and
“ her crime, which had escaped the notice of
“ men, met with its punishment from God.
“ Another, who had attempted with her pol-
“ luted hands to open her chest (in which the
“ consecrated elements, according to the custom
“ of that age, were kept for her use at home)
“ fire burst out of it in such a manner, that she
“ durst not touch it. Another man, who had
“ also been defiled, having had the assurance to
“ take a part of the consecrated bread, among
“ the rest, undiscovered, could neither eat nor
“ handle it, but, instead of it, found a coal of
“ fire in his hands [1].”

Now what other notion can we reasonably entertain of these strange stories, but that they were partly forged, and partly aggravated and dressed up into this tragical form, from some accidental disorders, which the sense of a concealed guilt,

[1] Vid. *Cyprian. de Lapsis*, Edit. Nic. Rigalt. p. 175.

and the dread of God's judgments upon it, would naturally raise in anxious minds, on that awful occasion of receiving the Sacrament? For it is certain, that they were of the greatest use in these times of danger and trial, to support the discipline of the Church, which the *Lord guarded*, as Mr. *Dodwell* says, *by these terrors, as by the sword of a Cherubin* [1]. Since none of those, who had secretly lapsed, or been weak enough to deny the faith, and from a desire of concealing their shame, had evaded the penance of the Church, durst either come openly to the Sacrament, or take it even privately at home, or yet wholly abstain from it, when the divine judgments were so signally exerted upon all, who had ventured on any of those expedients, before they had made a public satisfaction for their crime, and been absolved of it in form by the Pastors of the Church. And it was without doubt for this end, that all these stories, with many more of the same kind, were so pompously and rhetorically set forth by this eminent Bishop, in his celebrated treatise concerning the *lapsed Christians*.

§ 5. As to the gift of *expounding the Scriptures, or the mysteries of God*, by a divine inspiration, which is claimed likewise by the Primitive Fathers, there is not the least trace of it to be

[1] Ita munivit Ecclesie sue Dominus, quasi gladio quodam Cherubico, sanctam undequaque disciplinam. *Diff. Iren. ii. § 54.*

found in any age of the Church, from the days of the Apostles. For in the second and third Centuries, the very period in which all the other miraculous gifts are supposed to have flourished in their greatest vigor, it is certain, as we have seen above, that a most senseless, extravagant, and enthusiastic method of expounding prevailed, which has ever since been utterly slighted and rejected: whereas in these later days, when all extraordinary gifts are confessedly ceased, a clear, solid, and rational way of interpreting generally obtains, as the warmest advocates of Antiquity are forced to allow. And whenever any particular Father happens to be censured for his ridiculous comments on sacred Writ, his Apologists with one voice alledge, that such expositions are not to be charged to the man, *but to the age in which he lived*, which could not relish or indure any better.

Justin Martyr, however, lays claim to this gift, as conferred upon him by the special grace of God [1], upon which Mr. *Tillemont* declares, “that of all the extraordinary graces, which the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the Church in those times, there were few so considerable, as that of understanding the Scriptures, which was communicated by singular favor to *Justin* [2].” Yet from all the writings and monuments of

[1] Ἀπεκάλυψεν ἔν ἡμῖν πάντα ταῦτα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γεγραμμένων διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ μενέκαμεν. Edit. Thirlb. it. p. 258, 391.
 [2] *Memoirs*, Tom. ii. p. 358, 380.
Just. Dial. par. ii. p. 352.

the very earliest Fathers, which remain to us, it is manifest, beyond all contradiction, that there never was any such gift in the Church, after the times of the Apostles; and that *Justin* in particular, had no better claim to it than any of the rest. And if those Fathers then, through a fervency of zeal, or an enthusiastic turn of mind, could mistake such fanciful expositions for divine inspirations, I see no reason, why they might not as easily be deluded in every other instance of those pretended gifts, which flattered the same zeal and spirit that so strongly possessed them.

It is a common case with men of great piety, zealously persuaded of the truth and high importance of any religious doctrine, to think it reasonable, that God should interpose himself miraculously in favor of it, when it happens to be opposed by any earthly power, and in danger of being oppressed: and when they are thus prepared by their prejudices, to expect a divine interposition, they listen to every pretension of that sort, which craft or wild enthusiasm can devise, without allowing their reason to examine it, or to suggest the suspicion of a fraud. There are many instances of this in History, and a remarkable one in our own; that of *the Holy Maid of Kent*, in the reign of *Henry the VIIIth*: who, by the pretence of *visions and divine revelations*, communicated in *trances or ecstacy*, contrived by Popish Priests, to raise the sinking credit of their cause, drew in Bishop *Fisher*, with many other

other eminent persons, to take her for a *Prophetess*, divinely inspired, as *Tertullian* did his *ecstatic Maid*. Yet this modern Prelate was more learned and judicious, than any one perhaps of all the ancient Fathers, and by all accounts of him, as pious and religious too: since he lost his life, or, in the style of the *Romish* Church, suffered martyrdom, for the sake of those very prejudices which betrayed him into this folly. But the Lord *Cromwell*, expostulating with him on that subject, rightly told him, “ that the true
“ reason which induced him to give credit to
“ the maid, was the matter of her prophecies: to
“ which he was so addicted, that nothing could
“ come amiss which served to that end; and he
“ appealed to his conscience, whether, if she
“ had prophesied in favor of the King’s pro-
“ ceedings, he would have given such easy cre-
“ dit to her, and not have examined the matter
“ farther [1].”

§ 6. The *gift of tongues* also is claimed, as we have seen, among the rest, and affirmed to have been actually possessed by the primitive Christians: for if the testimony of *Irenæus* can be credited, many were indued with it in his days, and heard to *speak all kinds of languages in the Church*. And in truth, this gift, in the common estimation of human reason, has been thought so essentially necessary to the propagation of the Gospel, in those first ages, that the Advocates of the pri-

[1] See Bp. Burnet’s Hist. Reform. Vol. i. p. 154.

mitive miracles, trusting to that hypothesis, instead of searching into the fact, urge the necessity of its continuance after the days of the Apostles, as a proof of the continuance of all the rest. Yet how great soever the importance of it may seem to be, it is evident, as I have elsewhere shewn, from the origin, nature, and exercise of it, as they are represented in the New Testament, that it was not permanent or lasting, either in the Church at large, or in those particular persons who were principally favored with it, but was granted onely on certain special occasions, and then again withdrawn, even from the Apostles themselves; so that, in the ordinary course of their ministry, they appear to have been generally destitute of it.

Irenæus however declares it to have been indulged to many in his days. But it is very remarkable, that this Primitive Bishop, who ascribes it so liberally to others, appears to have been in great want of it himself, for the propagation of the Gospel in his own *Diocese*, among the *Celtæ*, or *Gauls*; where, as *Dr. Cave* interprets his words, *it was not the least part of his trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the country; a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1]. Nor is it less strange also, that from the time of *Irenæus*, there is not a single Father, in all the succeeding ages, who, upon his authority, has ventured to carry on the same pretension, or make the least claim

[1] See *Cave's Lives of Saints*, Vol. i. p. 169. § ix.

tò it; or to speak of it in any other manner, than as a gift peculiar to the first Christians, in the times of the Apostles. And I might risk the merit of my argument on this single point; that, after the Apostolic times, there is not in all history one instance, either well attested, or even so much as mentioned, of any particular person, who had ever exercised this gift, or pretended to exercise it, in any age or country whatsoever. Mr. *Dodwell* supposes it to have ceased, in the reign of *M. Aurelius*, about sixty years after the death of *St. John* [1]. But it is not credible, that a gift of such eminent use should intirely cease, while all the rest were subsisting in full vigor, and abounding every day more and more. If, according to the common hypothesis, we admit them all to be true, it is not possible, I say, to imagine any cause, why this in particular should be withdrawn, and the rest continued: but if, agreeably to my system, we consider them all as fictitious, we then see an obvious and manifest reason for it. For all the other extraordinary gifts, *of healing diseases, casting out Devils, visions, and ecstatic revelations*, afford great room to Impostors, to exert all their craft of surprizing and dazzling the senses of the simple, the credulous, and the superstitious, of all ranks: whereas the *gift of tongues* cannot easily be counterfeited, or a pretension to it imposed on men

[1] A Marci temporibus deficere cœperunt gratiæ illæ extraordinariæ—defecere eorundem dona linguarum. *Diff. in Iren. ii. § 44.*

of sense, or on any indeed, but those who are utterly illiterate, and strangers to all tongues but their own: and to acquire a number of languages by natural means, and to a degree, that might make them pass for a supernatural gift, was a work of so much difficulty and labor, as rendered it impracticable to support a pretension of that kind, for a succession of many years. And this, in all probability, was the real cause of its being dropped so early in those primitive ages: for after the mention of it by *Irenæus*, we find it no longer in any subsequent list of the miraculous gifts, nor the least hint of its continuance in the Church, in any later writer, from that time down to the present. If this then appears to have been the case of this particular gift; that a false claim to it was made by the early Fathers, and held up for a while, till it could no longer be supported; it is sufficient, one would think, of itself, to blast the general credit of all the rest, though no particular mark of fraud could have been fixed on each of them separately: but when there is not a single one among them all, which, either from its nature or end, or manner of exertion, or the character of its witnesses, does not furnish just ground to suspect it as fictitious, it must needs persuade every rational inquirer, that they were all derived from the same source of craft and imposture.

In short; if we trace the history of this gift from its origin, we shall find, that, in the times
of

of the Gospel, in which alone the miracles of the Church are allowed to be true by all Christians, it was the first gift which was conferred upon the Apostles, in a public and illustrious manner, and reckoned ever after among the principal of those, which were imparted to the first converts. But in the succeeding ages, when miracles began to be of a suspected and dubious character, it is observable, that this gift is mentioned but once by a single writer, and then vanished of a sudden, without the least notice, or hint, given by any of the ancients, either of the manner, or time, or cause of its vanishing. Lastly, in the later ages, when the miracles of the Church were not onely suspected, but found to be false by our Reformers, and considered as such ever since by all Protestants, this gift has never once been heard of, or pretended to by the Romanists themselves, though they challenge at the same time all the other gifts of the Apostolic days. From all which, I think, we may reasonably infer, that the *gift of tongues*, may be considered as a proper test and criterion, for determining the miraculous pretensions of all Churches, which derive their descent from the Apostles: and consequently, if, in the list of their extraordinary gifts, they cannot shew us this, we may fairly conclude, that they have none else to shew, which are real and genuin.

I have now run through all the various kinds of the miraculous gifts, which are pretended to
have

have subsisted in the Church, during the second and third centuries; and have opened the genuine state of them, as far as it is discoverable to us at this distance, from the most authentic monuments and testimonies of the principal Fathers of those centuries. Ages, which are always styled the purest, and in which these very Fathers bore the first character, not onely on the account of their piety and integrity, but of their abilities also and learning. If any suspicions then can be entertained against such witnesses, they will be stronger still against all who succeeded them, especially after the Empire became Christian, when, according to the hypothesis of the very Admirers of these primitive ages, a general corruption both of faith and morals began more openly to infect the Christian Church: which by that revolution, as St. Jerom says, *lost as much of her virtue, as it had gained of power and wealth* [1].

But in the case of these miracles, there is one circumstance common to all the writers who attest them, as well in the earlier as the later ages; that though their assertions be strong, their instances are weak; and when, in proof of what they affirm, they descend to alledge any particular facts, they are usually so unlucky in the choice of them, that instead of strengthening, they weaken the credit of their general

[1] Et postquam ad Christianos principes venerit, potentia quidem & divitiis major, sed virtutibus minor est. Oper. Tom. ii. par. ii. p. 91.

affirmation, and, from the absurdity of each miracle related by them, furnish a fresh objection to their power of working any. This the reader can hardly fail to observe, from the examples already produced; to which I shall add one or two more of the most considerable, which are transmitted to us from the same ages, and which I had before omitted to recite.

One of the most authentic and celebrated pieces in all primitive antiquity, is *the circular letter of the Church of Smyrna*, containing a narrative of the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, their Bishop, and of *the many miracles*, as Mr. Dodwell says, *which made it illustrious* [1]. This letter, written about the middle of the second century, informs us, “That when that Saint was entering the lists, in which he was to be burnt, there was so great a tumult, that nobody could be heard.—But there came a voice to him from Heaven, saying, *Be strong, Polycarp, and acquit thyself like a man*: and though no body saw who it was that spake, yet many of the brethren heard the voice [2].—As soon as he had finished his prayer, the executioner

[1] Inter præcipua sacrae antiquitatis monumenta, quæ ex primis Ecclesiæ temporibus, ad nostram ætatem pervenerunt, jure merito computatur illa egregia epistola, quam de beati Polycarpi martyrio Ecclesia Smyrnenfis conscripsit. Ruinart. A. 3.

Martyr. p. 28.

Quanta autem miracula hoc Martyrium insignierint, testes habemus ipsos illos Polycarpi Smyrnaeos. Dodw. Diss. Iren. II. § xxxii.

[2] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. 8, 9. Apud Coteler. Patres Apost. T. II. p. 198.

“ kindled

“ kindled the fire, and the flame began to blaze
 “ to a great heighth: when behold, says the
 “ writer, a mighty wonder appeared to us, whose
 “ lot it was to see it, and who were reserved by
 “ Heaven to declare to others what we had
 “ seen. For the flame, forming a kind of arch,
 “ like to the sail of a ship filled with the wind,
 “ encompassed the body of the martyr, as in a
 “ circle; who stood in the midst of it, not as
 “ flesh which is burnt, but bread which is bak-
 “ ed, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace:
 “ and so sweet a smell issued from him all the
 “ while, as if it had been the smoke of frankin-
 “ cense or some rich spices. At length, when
 “ these wicked men saw, that his body could
 “ not be consumed by fire, they commanded the
 “ executioner to draw near, and to thrust his
 “ sword into him; which being done accord-
 “ ingly, there came out of his body a *Dove*,
 “ and so great a quantity of blood, as quite ex-
 “ tinguished the fire: so that the whole multi-
 “ tude were amazed, to see so great a difference
 “ between the Unbelievers and the Elect [1].”
 Yet it appears from the sequel of the narrative,
 that there was fire enough still left, to consume
 the body to ashes, which was executed with
 great care, that the Christians might not be able
 to preserve the least remains of it.

The greatest part of this Epistle is transcribed
 by *Eusebius*, who has omitted the mention of *the*
Dove which flew out of his body; for which

[1] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. 15, 16.

reason Mr. *Dodwell* and Archbishop *Wake* have thought fit also to omit it. Yet all the oldest copies still extant, from which Archbishop *Usher*, *Cotelerius*, and *Ruinart*, published their several editions, retain this passage [1]: which *Eusebius* might probably drop for the same reason, for which Mr. *Dodwell* and Bishop *Wake* also profess to have dropt it; viz. for the sake of rendering the narrative *the less suspected* [2].”

[1] Præ aliis latinis versionibus, id habet Usseriana, quod omnium omnino aliarum longe antiquissima sit, utpote quæ non multo post Eusebii tempora facta fuerit: quamque existimat Usserius ipsam eandem fuisse, quæ olim in Ecclesia Gallicana legebatur. *Ruinart*. ib. p. 28. Vid. it. *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* l. iv. c. 15.

[2] Nec enim illa urgeamus, quæ de Columba habet Codex Usserianus, quæ nullatiquè comparent in Eusebio aut Ruffino. Nec enim supposititiis, suspectæ fidei monumentis immistis, verorum fidem censuimus derogandam. *Dodw. Diss. Iren.* 11. xxxii.

N.B. Archbishop *Wake* explaining his reasons for omitting the story of *the Dove*, says, “Now though there may seem to have been something of a foundation

“for such a miracle, in the
 “raillery of *Lucian*, upon the
 “death of *Peregrinus* the Phi-
 “losopher, who burnt him-
 “self about the same time
 “that *Polycarp* suffered, and
 “from whose *Funeral Pile* he
 “makes a *Vulture* to ascend, in
 “opposition, it may be, to
 “*Polycarp’s Pigeon* (if indeed
 “he designed, as a learned
 “man has conjectured, un-
 “der the story of that Philo-
 “sopher, to ridicule the life
 “and sufferings of *Polycarp*)
 “yet I confess, I am so little
 “a friend to such kind of *Mi-
 “racles*, that I thought it bet-
 “ter with *Eusebius*, to omit
 “that circumstance, than to
 “mention it from *Ep. Usher’s*
 “*Manuscript*,” &c. [Prelim.
Disc. p. 57.] which *Manu-
 script*, however, he afterwards
 declares, *to be so well attested,
 that we need not any farther
 assurance of the truth of it.* p.
 59.

To the end of this letter is annexed the following advertisement: “ The Epistle was transcribed by *Caius*, from the copy of *Irenæus*, the disciple of *Polycarp*; and I, *Socrates*, transcribed it at *Corinth*. After which I, *Pionius*, again wrote it out, from the copy abovementioned, having searched it out by the revelation of *Polycarp*, who directed me to it,” &c.

Eusebius also relates a miracle, wrought by *Narcissus* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, about the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century: “ That when the sacred oil was almost spent, in the vigil of *Easter*, and the people were in a great consternation about it, he ordered those, who had the care of the lamps, to go and draw water from a certain well in the neighbourhood, and to bring it away to him: which being accordingly done, *Narcissus*, after he had prayed over it, commanded them to pour it into the lamps with a sincere faith in Christ, upon which, by a miraculous and divine power, the nature of the water was changed into the fatness of oil: of which oil, as *Eusebius* says, several small quantities were

These deaths of the Primitive Martyrs seldom failed of being accompanied by miracles, which, as we find them related in the old Martyrologies, were generally copied from each other: concerning sweet smells issuing from their bodies, and their

wonderful resistance of all kinds of torture; and the miraculous cures of their wounds and bruises, so as to tire their tormentors by the difficulty of destroying them, which yet, after a vain Profusion of miracles, was always effected at the last.

“ preserved

“ preserved by great numbers of the faithful,
 “ to his time, which was about an hundred
 “ years after the date of the miracle [1].”

The same historian, giving an account of the horrible barbarities, which were exercised upon the Christians of *Palæstine*, concludes one of his stories in the following manner, “ after these
 “ things had been transacted many days succes-
 “ sively, this miracle appeared: there was a
 “ clear and bright sky, and a remarkable seren-
 “ nity of the air: when on a sudden, the pillars
 “ in the porticos of the city poured out drops
 “ of tears; and when there was not the least
 “ moisture in the air, the streets and public
 “ places were all wet, nobody knew how, as if
 “ water had been thrown upon them: so that
 “ it became a common talk, that the earth wept
 “ for the impiety which was committed; and to
 “ reprove the relentless and savage nature of
 “ men, stones, and inanimate bodies, shed tears
 “ for what had happened [2].” A description of this kind might easily be excused in an Orator or a Poet, but when an Historian, after he has raised our attention, and prepared us to expect something great and miraculous, tells us onely, *of stones shedding tears for the impieties of*

[1] Παρὰ δὲ πλείστοις τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐπὶ μήκιστον ἐξ ἐκείνης κη εἰς ἡμᾶς βραχὺ τι δαίγματα τῆ τότε θαύματα φυλαχθῆναι. Hist. Eccl. 6, 9.

[2] Εφ' οἷς πλείστοις ἡμέραις ἐπιλημμένοι, τοιοῦτόν τι παραδύξον συμβαίνει. Ibid. c. ix. p. 425.

men, he debases the gravity of History, and makes miracles themselves contemptible.

Mr. *Dodwell*, as I have before said, has, with great diligence, deduced the History of the primitive miracles, down to these very times of *Eusebius*; which he then shuts up with the establishment of Christianity by human laws, declaring, “That many things concurred to re-
“ commend the credit of the preceding ages,
“ which have no place in those that follow-
“ ed [1].” And speaking of the life of *Gregory*, called the *Wonder-worker*, written by *Gregory of Nyssa*, a Bishop of the greatest piety and gravity, he says, “In this Life there are many things
“ which breathe the air of imposture and the
“ genius of the fourth century, so that I dare not
“ mix them with what is more genuin, for fear
“ of hurting the credit of all [2].” For this reason therefore, it was my first intention to confine my inquiries also to the same period; but having since perceived, that several of our learned Divines, and principal advocates of the Christian faith, have not scrupled to assert the succession of true miracles, to the end even of the fifth century, I thought it necessary to extend my argument to the same length, lest I should seem to neglect any evidence which could be

[1] *Multa enim faciunt ad § 62.*
 primorum Seculorum com-
 mendandam fidem, quæ lo-
 cum in sequentium seculo-
 rum testimoniis prorsus nul-
 lum habent. *Dissert. Iren. ii.*

[2] *Fateor ibi multa legi,*
 quarti, in quo vixit Gregori-
 us, seculi, impostorumque ge-
 nium referentia, &c. *Ibid. §*
 55.

offered to me, and especially such, as is declared to be *convincing* and *decisive* by men of their character. But from every step, that we advance forward, we shall readily perceive, that Mr. *Dodwell*, who had as much piety and more learning, than any of them, has in this respect shewn more judgement too, by restraining the miraculous powers of the Church to the three first centuries.

In the fourth century, we find some of the principal Fathers delivering themselves on this subject so variously and inconsistently, as shews, that tho' they were ashamed to deny, what they knew to be true, yet they were desirous to inculcate, what they knew to be false. For on some occasions, when they are pressed, they plainly confess, that miracles were then ceased; yet on others, they appeal to them again as common, and performed among them every day. For example, St. *Chrysoptom* observes, “ that in
“ the infancy of the Church, the extraordinary
“ gifts of the Spirit were bestowed even on the
“ unworthy, because those early times stood in
“ need of that help, for the more easy propaga-
“ tion of the Gospel; but now, says he, they
“ are not given even to the worthy, because the
“ present strength of the Christian faith is no
“ longer in want of them [1].” In another place, speaking of the miraculous powers of the Apostles, and of the force, which they had in

[1] Ἦν δὲ ἐν αὐτῶν δίδχαι, ταύτην δύναμιν τῆς ἐκκλησίας.
ἡ γὰρ λογὴ τῆς πίστεως ἐκείνη. Op. T. iii. p. 65 Edit Bened.

converting the Gentile world, “ wherefore, adds
 “ he, because no miracles are wrought now, we
 “ are not to take it for a proof, that none were
 “ wrought then; for then they were of use, but
 “ now they are not: for the first planters of the
 “ Gospel were simple and ignorant men, and
 “ had nothing to teach from themselves; but
 “ what they received from God, that they de-
 “ livered to the world: so we likewise of these
 “ times, bring nothing indeed of our own, but
 “ what we received from them, that we declare
 “ to all. — Nor do we yet persuade by the force
 “ of our reason, but evince the truth of our
 “ doctrines from the holy Scriptures, and the
 “ miracles then wrought in confirmation of
 “ them [1].” Again, speaking of the Jews,
 in our Saviour’s time, who *desired a sign*, he says,
 “ there are some also even now, who desire and
 “ ask, Why are not miracles performed still at
 “ this day? and why are there no persons, who
 “ raise the dead and cure diseases?” To which
 he replies, “ that it was owing to the want of
 “ faith, and virtue, and piety in those times [2].”
 On another occasion also he declares, “ that St.
 “ Paul’s Handkerchiefs could once do greater
 “ miracles, than all the Christians of his days

[1] Ibid. Op. T. x. p. 45,
46.

p. 138. A. It. T. xi. p. 387,
388.

[2] Καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῶν εἰσὼν αἱ
 ζῆλοι καὶ ἀρεταὶ, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῶν
 σημεῖα γινώσκαι. &c. Ib. T. viii.

[3] Id de Sacerdot. l. iv.
Op. T. i. p. 411. A.

“ could

“ could do, with ten thousand prayers and
 “ tears [1].” Lastly, in *his books of consolation*,
 addressed to his friend *Stagirius*, who was sup-
 posed to be possessed and horribly tormented by
 an evil spirit, it is expressly signified, “ that nei-
 “ ther the tombs of the Martyrs, to which he
 “ had often applied for relief, nor the repeated
 “ endeavours of the most holy and celebrated
 “ Exorcists of those days, were able to drive the
 “ Devil out of him [2].

[1] *Id de Sacerdot.* l. iv. Op. T. i. p. 411. A.

[2] *Ad Stagir.* lib. i. Op. T. i. p. 179. A.

N. B. St. *Chrysoström* is thought to have written these books to *Stagirius*, about A. D. 380. which Mr. *Whiston* recommends, as very curious, and well worth the perusal of inquisitive men. [See *Dæmoniacs*, p. 60.] I have run them slightly over, and shall give the reader a short abstract, of what I chiefly collected from them, since it relates to my present subject, and helps still to illustrate the true character and principles of this fourth age.

Stagirius was the Son and Heir of a noble family in *Antioch*, trained up in the Christian Religion; who, in contradiction to the will, and earnest remonstrances of his Father, had taken a re-

solution to enter into the Monastick life: for which purpose he seems to have withdrawn himself, in a secret manner, though with the privity of his Mother, into a certain Monastery, where he lay concealed from the pursuit and discovery of his Father. On his first entrance however, he did not easily relish the rough discipline of the cloyster; but presuming on the splendor of his birth, expected some exemption from the severer parts of it; till being inured to it by degrees, and confirmed by the example and admonitions of the Elder Monks, he became equal to the most perfect of them in the frequency of his fastings and watchings, and all the other arts of mortifying his body. But now the Devil resolved, if possible, to shake

There are several other passages in this Father of the same strain; in which he allows the

his constancy, and attacked him with all that train of evils, which his power and malice could inflict: by which he reduced him at last to such a state of melancholy and despair, as made life itself insupportable to him. In this condition he laid open his complaints to his friends, and particularly to St. *Cyphessom*, by whom they are severally enumerated and summed up in the following manner.

First, That in the former part of his life, while he lived like other men in the world, he never suffered any thing of this kind: but after he had crucified himself to the world, he presently fell under the sense of this disorder, which was sufficient to throw him into despair.

2dly, That many, who, from a luxurious life, had been afflicted in the same way, were yet relieved in a short time, and restored to perfect health, so as to marry, and become the Fathers of many children, and enjoy all the other delights of the

world, without ever relapsing into the same misery: whereas he who had spent so much time in fastings, and watchings, and the other austerities of the Monkish discipline, could find no respite from his affliction.

3dly, That the holy man, who had shewn so much power in healing others in the same case, was not able to do him any service; neither he himself, nor any of the rest, who were with him, and more powerful even than he in these cures, but were all forced to go away with shame to themselves.

4thly, That he was so oppressed on this account with grief and despair, as to be frequently tempted to hang, or drown, or throw himself from some precipice.

5thly, That his companions, who entered with him into the same sort of life, continued to live at their ease and undisturbed, while he had no peace or rest, but was confined as it were to a prison, of all others the cessation

cessation of miracles, and speaks of them even with contempt, “ as proper onely to rouſe the

moſt wretched, ſince no fetters of iron were ſo grievous as the chain, with which he was bound.

6thly, That what chiefly diſturbed and made him tremble even with fear, was, leſt his Father ſhould come to the knowledge of his caſe, and do ſome great miſchief to thoſe holy men, who firſt received him; and truſting to his power and wealth, and hurried on by his paſſion, ſhould attempt all ſorts of violence againſt them. That his mother indeed had hitherto been able to concele the matter from him, and elude the effect of his inquiries; but if he ſhould happen to detect her diſſimulation, his reſentment would be intolerable both to her and to the Monks.

Laſtly, That the completion of his miſery was, to have no confidence or hope in what was to come, and not to know, whether he ſhould ever find any cure or eaſe, ſince his expectations had been ſo often fruſtrated, by relapſing ſtill into the ſame evil.

Now from this detail of his complaints, as they were repreſented by himſelf, what elſe can we collect, but that this noble Youth, diſgusted perhaps by ſome little domeſtic uneaſineſs, had been ſeduced by certain Monks, to bid adieu to the world and retire into a Convent? In which retreat, by reflecting at leiſure on the raſhneſs of his reſolution, and the provocation which he had given by it to an indulgent Parent, he ſeems to have been ſtung with remorse: while the auſterities, which he now practiſed, and by which he hoped to calm his mind, and conciliate the favor of heaven, inſtead of appeaſing, ſerved onely to increaſe his anxiety, and reduced him by degrees to ſuch a weakneſs and dejection, both of body and mind, as brought on horrible Symptoms, and Epileptic fits, and made him completely miſerable. This naturally inſufed ſcruples and ſuſpicions, which he himſelf gently intimates, that he was in a wrong way, and owed all his ſufferings to his unhappy change of life; and that a return therefore to the

“dull and sluggish, but usefess to men of philo-
 “sophical minds; that they were frequently li-

world, where he had never felt any such, would free him from them again, by affording him the comforts of matrimony, and children, and all the other sweets of social life.

That this was the real cause and source of his complaints, is evident from his own account of them. Let us see then what sort of comfort *St. Chrysoftom* thought fit to administer to him in this sad state. This holy Father had himself also, when young, taken the same resolution of retiring from the world; in consequence of which, after he had spent several years in a Monastery, he betook himself to the mountains, where he lived as an Hermit, in a solitary cave, for two years more: till perceiving at last, that the infirmity of his body could no longer indure the severity of that discipline, he quitted his solitude, and chose to reside in *Antioch*, where he is supposed to have written this elaborate consolation to *Stagirius*. But tho' he left the *Afflictive* life himself, when he found it hurtful to his health, he never once suggests the same advice to his

friend *Stagirius*, nor ever mentions the onely remedy, which could afford him any solid comfort; viz. to quit the place and way of life, which had given birth to all his troubles; and to reconcile himself to his Father, by returning to the world, and by the use of its innocent pleasures, to calm the disorders of his mind, and restore it to its former tranquillity.

This, I say, was the most rational and effectual comfort which could be administered to him; but instead of this, *St. Chrysoftom* employs all his rhetoric to persuade him, that his sufferings were the sure marks of the divine favor, and had been of the greatest service to him: that he could not but remember, on his first entrance into the Monastery, and before the Devil began to vex him, how difficult he found it, to comply with the rules of the society; how haughty and sluggish he was; how hard to be roused from his bed, and how angry with those who disturbed him: but from the time of this trial and struggle with the Devil, all that difficulty was at an end, and no man
 “able

“ able to finifter fufpicions, of being mere phan-
 “ tafms and illufions, and that it was a proof of

furpaffed him in all thofe aufterities and exercifes of devotion, which conftitute the perfection of the Chriftian life. He exhorts him therefore to perfevere in his faftings and watchings, and all his other mortifications, as the onely means of baffling all thefe efforts and terrors, by which the Devil was laboring to drive him from that bleffed courfe. That while he was immerfed in the pleasures of the world, or was yet a novice and raw in the Monaftic life, God would not expofe him to this trial, nor fuffer the Devil to attack him; knowing, that he would then be an unequal match, and fall an eafy prey to the Adverfary: but now that he was become firm and perfect in all his exercifes, God committed him to the Stadium, as an expert champion, and fure to come off with glory from the combat. That as to the trouble, which he fuffered on the account of his Father, it was a weaknefs to afflict himfelf for what might or might not happen hereafter: that his Father, perhaps, would never come to the

knowledge of his cafe; or, if he did, would be fo much difturbed at it, as he imagined: that a man of his temper, fond of vain expences, and jovial company, puffed with pride, and haughtinefs, and enflaved to a Concubine, whom he kept in his houfe, would have but little concern for the diftreff of a Son. That he had fhewn this already by experiments; for though he had once loved him with the utmoft tendernefs, and above all things in the world, yet all that love was extinguifhed, upon his entrance into the monaffery; which his Father declared to be a bafenefs, unworthy of his Anceftors, and difgraceful to the fplendor of his Family. It was probable therefore, that he would rejoice at his calamity, and think it a punishment of his difobedience to him, in betaking himfelf to a way of life, from which he had labored fo earneftly to difluade him.—In fhort the Summ of *St. Chryfoftom's* confoiation is this: *That the more Stagirius fuffered in this conflict, the more affured he might be, that he was under the peculiar care*

“the greater generofity of that age, to take
“God’s word without fuch pledges [1].”

of heaven; and that by finding no relief, either from the tombs of the Martyrs, which he had fo often vifited, or from his long abode with thofe holy Exorcifts, who had never failed of fuccefs before, he had a clear demonftration of God’s particular regard for him; who would never have hindered the effect of fo much grace, nor expofed his own fervants to fo much fhame, if he had not known it conducive to the greater good and probation of Stagirius.

Such were the arts, by which the Saints of this fourth age were fubjecting the world to the tyranny of fuperftition. Not content to make men Chriftians, they could not reft till they had made them alfo Monks; till they had perfuaded them, that the onely way of ferving God was, by rendering themfelves ufelefs to man; and of faving their fouls, by doing mifchief to their bodies. By this fenfelefs cant, they made it their bufinefs, to gain the Mothers chiefly in the firft place, and through them their children: efpecially thofe of the rich and the great: without the leaft regard to the will or their fathers, the diftreff of their families, the breach of filial

duty, or the ruin which they wrought to the health, the fortunes, and the happinefs of thofe, whom they enflaved. We find feveral other inftances of this kind in the works of this fame *Chryftom*, concerning the heirs of rich families, ftolen away from their fathers by the artifices of Monks, which, as he himfelf informs us, raifed fuch a clamor and indignation againft the whole Monkifh Order, among the generality of the better fort, as transported them almoft to madnefs; to fee their children decoyed from them into a life, which they confidered as utterly fordid and defpicable. It was for the fake of appeafing thefe clamors, that he compofed his three books, *againft the Oppugnors of the Monkifh life*; one of which is addreffed to the believing, and another to the unbelieving Fathers, in order to convince them both, of the excellence of this divine *philofophy*, as it was called, and of the happinefs accruing to their fons, from their choice and purfuit of it.

[1] Vid. Oper. T. v. p. 455, 271. It. T. vii. 375. E. 376. B. &c.

From

From these testimonies, one would necessarily conclude, upon the authority of *St. Chrysoftom*, that miracles were ceased in his days : yet in other parts of his works we find him in a different story, and haranguing on the mighty wonders, which were performed among them every day, *by the reliques of the Martyrs, in casting out Devils, curing all diseases, and drawing whole Cities and people to their Sepulchres* [1]. He displays also the miraculous cures, wrought by the use of *consecrated oil, and by the sign of the Cross* : which last he calls *a defence against all evil, and a medicine against all sickness, and affirms it to have been miraculously impressed, in his own time, on people's garments* 2].

St. Austin also, who lived at the same time, though in a different part of the world, takes notice of the same objection, made by the Sceptics, with which the Christians were commonly urged in this age. “ They ask us, says he, *Why are not those miracles performed now, which you declare to have been wrought formerly ?* I could tell them, that they were then necessary, before the world believed, for this very purpose, that the world might believe ; but he, who still requires prodigies, that he may become a believer, is himself a great prodigy, who does not believe now, when the world does believe [3].” One would not imagine, that

[1] Vid. Oper. T. iii. p. 338, 339. [3] Cur, inquit, nunc illa miracula, quæ prædica-

[2] Ibid. T. xi. p. 387. A. it. T. v. p. 271. D. tis facta esse, non sunt ? pos-

these words, which seem to imply a cessation of miracles, were the preface to an elaborate narrative and solemn attestation of great numbers of them, said to have been wrought in these very times: which, if true, as they are here affirmed by St. *Austin* from his own knowledge, must have been more illustrious, both for the number and excellence of them, than all, which were wrought by the Apostles themselves.

But before we descend to particulars, I cannot forbear observing, what this Father has delivered concerning the general state and credit of them among the Christians themselves, at the very time, when they were wrought. He tells us then, “ that though miracles were frequently
 “ wrought, either by the *name of Jesus, or by his*
 “ *Sacraments, or by the prayers or the memorials of*
 “ *the Martyrs*; yet the fame of them was not so
 “ illustrious, as of those of the Apostles: since
 “ they were scarce ever known to the whole
 “ City or place, where they happened to be per-
 “ formed; but for the most part, to a very few
 “ onely; while all the rest were utterly ignorant
 “ of them; especially if the city was large: and
 “ if ever they were told abroad to other people,
 “ yet they were not recommended with such
 “ authority, as to be received without difficulty

sem quidem dicere, necessaria
 prius fuisse, quam crederet
 mundus, ad hoc, ut crederet
 mundus. Quisquis adhuc
 prodigia, ut credat, inquit,

magnum est ipse prodigium,
 qui, mundo credente, non
 credit. De Civ. Dei, l. xxii.
 c. 8.

“ and

“and doubting, though reported by true believers, to true believers [1].”

That he might put an end therefore to this strange negligence of the Christians, with regard to their own miracles, he took care, as oft as he heard of any miracle, “that the parties concerned in it should be examined, and a verbal process, or authentic narrative be drawn of the fact, which was afterwards publicly read to the people. Yet all this caution, as he says, was not sufficient to make the miracles known, or at all regarded: because those, who were present at the recital of such narratives, heard them but once, while the greater part were absent: and even those, who heard them, retained nothing, a few days after, of what they had heard, and seldom or never took the pains, to tell it to any body else, whom they knew to be absent [2].” This account of the matter would be very surprizing, were it not explained to us by the miracles themselves; of which I have here added a few specimens, whence we shall easily collect the reason of that coldness and indifference, which the people of those days expressed towards them.

[1] Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula, in ejus nomine, sive per sacramenta ejus, sive per orationes vel memorias Sanctorum ejus, sed non eadem claritate illustrantur — & quando alibi, aliisque narrantur, non tanta ea com-

mendat auctoritas, ut sine difficultate, vel dubitatione credantur, quamvis Christianis fidelibus a fidelibus indicentur. Ibid. § 1.

[2] Ut nec illi, qui adsuerunt, post aliquot dies, quod audierunt, mente retineant;

For instance, among many other stories of the same kind, he relates these, which follow: “ a
 “ pious old Cobler of *Hippe*, where he him-
 “ self was bishop, having lost his old coat, and
 “ wanting money to buy a new one, betook
 “ himself to *the twenty Martyrs*, whose chapel or
 “ memorial was famous in that city; where he
 “ prayed to them very earnestly, that he might
 “ be enabled by them to get some cloaths. Some
 “ young Fellows, who overheard him, began
 “ to make sport with him, and pursued him
 “ with their scoffs, for begging money to buy a
 “ coat. But as the old man walked away, with-
 “ out minding them, he saw a large fish lie
 “ gasping on the shore, which he caught by the
 “ help of the young men, and sold to a Christian
 “ Cook, for three hundred pence; and laying
 “ out the money on wool, set his wife to work,
 “ to provide cloaths for him: but the Cook,
 “ cutting open the fish, found a gold ring also
 “ in the belly of it; which, out of compassion
 “ to the poor man, and the terror also of reli-
 “ gion, he presently carried to the Cobler, say-
 “ ing, *See here is the cloathing, which the twenty*
 “ *Martyrs have given you* [1].

“ There was one *H-jerius* likewise, as he tells
 “ us, a man of Tribunician quality, whose coun-

& vix quisquam reperitur quorum Memoria apud nos
 illorum, qui ei, quem non est celeberrima, clara voce,
 adfuisse cognoverit, indicet ut veliretur, oravit, &c. Ib.
 quod audivit. Ibid. § 2 § 9.

[1] Ad viginti Martyres,

“ try

“ try house near *Hippo* was haunted by evil
“ spirits, and his cattle also and servants afflicted
“ by them : upon which he sent a message to
“ the Priests at *Hippo*, when *Austin* happened to
“ be absent, that some of them would come over
“ to him, and drive the evil Spirits away by
“ their prayers. One of them accordingly
“ went, and offered *the sacrifice of Christ's body*
“ upon the spot, praying at the same time, as
“ fervently as he was able, that this vexation
“ might be removed ; upon which by God's
“ mercy it instantly ceased [1].

“ The same *Hesperius* had received from a
“ friend some *holy earth*, brought from *Jeru-*
“ *salem*, where Christ rose from his grave on the
“ third day ; which earth he hung up in his bed-
“ chamber, to secure himself from the mischief
“ of those evil spirits. But since his house was
“ now cleared of them, he was considering, what
“ he should do with this earth, being unwilling,
“ out of reverence to it, to keep it any longer
“ in his bed-chamber. It happened, that St.
“ *Austin* and another Bishop, called *Maximinus*,
“ were then in the neighbourhood ; so that
“ *Hesperius* sent them an invitation to come to
“ his house ; which they immediately accepted ;
“ and after he had acquainted them with the
“ whole affair, he desired, that *the sacred earth*
“ might be deposited somewhere in the Ground,
“ and an Oratory built over it, where the
“ Christians might assemble for the performance

[1] *Ibid.* § 6.

“ of divine service: the two Bishops had no
 “ objection, so that his Project was presently
 “ executed. There was at the same place a
 “ country lad, afflicted with the palsy; who
 “ having heard what was done, begged of his
 “ parents, that they would carry him without
 “ delay to that holy place, whither as soon as
 “ he was brought, he put up his prayers, and
 “ presently returned back on foot in perfect
 “ health [1].”

There are many more tales of this sort, as contemptible as any in the Popish legends, and all attested by this celebrated Father, from his own knowledge: yet these are nothing to the extravagant things, which he goes on to relate, of *the reliques of the Martyr Stephen*. For as *reliques* were now become the most precious treasure of the Church, so these of *St. Stephen*, after they had lain buried and unknown for near four centuries, were revealed in a vision, to one *Lucianus* a Priest, by *Gamaliel*, the celebrated Doctor of the law, at whose feet *St. Paul* had been bred, and being found by his direction, were removed with great solemnity, and many miracles, into *Jerusalem* [2]. The fame of these reliques was soon spread through the Christian

[1] Ibid.

[2] The history of this revelation of *St. Stephen's reliques*, and of the miracles, which were wrought by them, is particularly delivered by several ancient writers,

whose pieces are annexed, as an Appendix to the seventh Volume of *St. Austlin*. Edit. Benedict. And the same revelation is referred to likewise by *St. Austlin* himself in different parts of his works.

world;

world; and many little portions of them brought away by holy Pilgrims, to enrich the particular Churches of their own countries. For wherever any reliques were deposited, an Oration or Chapel was always built over them, which was called a *Memorial* of that Martyr, whose reliques it contained. Several reliques therefore of St. *Stephen* having been brought by different people into *Afric*, as many memorials of him were consequently erected in different places, of which three were peculiarly famous, one at *Hippo*, where St. *Austin* was Bishop, a second at *Calama*, and a third at *Uzalis*, two other Episcopal cities; and many great and illustrious miracles were continually wrought in them all.

St. *Austin* has given us a particular relation of some of them, by which *the gout, the stone, and fistula's*, were instantly cured; *the blind restored to sight*; and *five different persons raised even from death to life*. Two of whom were *carried dead to the reliques, and brought back alive*: two more restored to life, by the virtue of *their garments only*, which had touched the reliques; and a fifth, *by the oil of the Martyr's lamps*. After all which wonderful stories, he adds the following apology, not for telling us so many of them, but so few, out of the infinite number, which were publicly known and recorded.

“What shall I do? says he: I am engaged
“by promise, to finish the present work, so
“that it is not possible for me, in this place, to
“relate

“ relate all the miracles which I know ; and our
 “ people, without doubt, when they read these,
 “ will be grieved, that I have omitted so many,
 “ which they know to be true, as well as I. But
 “ I beg them to excuse me, and to consider
 “ what a tedious piece of work it would be, to
 “ do that, which the nature of my argument
 “ does not oblige me to do here. For were I
 “ to relate onely the miracles of cures, without
 “ mentioning the rest, which have been per-
 “ formed by this Martyr, the most glorious
 “ *Stephen*, in the colony of *Calama*, and in our
 “ own, it would fill a great number of volumes.
 “ nor would it be possible to collect them all,
 “ but such of them onely, of which certificates
 “ have been made, and read to the people. For
 “ this I ordered to be done, when I saw the ef-
 “ fects of the divine powers, like to those of the
 “ ancients, so frequently exerted also in our own
 “ times, which ought not be lost from the no-
 “ tice of the multitude. It is not yet two years,
 “ since this memorial was founded at *Hippo*, and
 “ though I am certain, that no account was
 “ taken of many of the miracles, yet at the
 “ time, when I wrote this, the number of cer-
 “ tificates publicly made, amounted to near se-
 “ venty : but at *Calama*, where the memorial is
 “ of longer standing, and certificates more fre-
 “ quently taken, they reach to a far greater
 “ number.

“ At *Uzalis* also, we know many eminent mi-
 “ racles wrought by the same Martyr ; whose
 Memorial

“ memorial was instituted there by their Bi-
“ shop *Evodius*, much earlier than with us. But
“ it is not the custom with them to take certi-
“ ficates, or it was not rather, because now it
“ is probably begun. For when I was lately
“ there, I exhorted *Petronia*, a celebrated Ma-
“ tron, who had been miraculously cured of a
“ great and lingering illness, in which the Phy-
“ sicians were not able to help her, to get a cer-
“ tificate drawn of the case, and read publicly
“ to the people, to which, by the advice also
“ of the said Bishop of the place, she willingly
“ consented, and inserted in it another miracle,
“ which, notwithstanding the haste that I am
“ in, to put an end to this work, I cannot for-
“ bear relating, &c. [1]”

I have dwelt the longer on these miracles, than the importance of them perhaps may be thought to require: but they are so precisely described and authentically attested, by one of the most venerable Fathers in all antiquity, who affirms them to have been wrought within his own knowledge, and under his own eyes, that they seem of all others the best adapted, to evince the truth of what I have been advancing, and to illustrate the real character of all the other miracles of the primitive times, both before and after them. Dr. *Chapman* however, speaking of the very same miracles, roundly declares them all, *to be so strongly attested, both by the effects, and the relators of them, that to doubt their*

[1] De Civ. Dei, l. xxii. c. viii. § 20, 21.

reality, were to doubt the evidence of sense [1]. On these then, I am content to rest the fate of my whole argument; and if either Dr. *Chapman* or Dr. *Berriman* can maintain these miracles to be credible, shall no longer dispute the credibility of any, from the Apostolic times down to our own. But, on the other hand, if miracles so strictly examined by a most Holy Bishop, confirmed by the certificates of eye-witnesses, and rehearsed publicly to the people, at the time when they are said to have been wrought cannot command our belief, these Doctors must needs confess, nay, they have already confessed, that the Christian Church can shew no other, except those of Christ and his Apostles, which can make any better pretensions to it.

For not to insist on the objections, which might reasonably be made to the probability of the facts themselves; to the incompetency of the instruments, by which, and of the ends, for which, they are said to have been performed; to the credulity of a prejudiced, or the fidelity rather of an artful and interested relator; it seems evident, from the neglect with which they were treated by the Christians themselves; from the obscurity in which they lay; from the diligence of St. *Austin*, to search them out; to get certificates of them; and to publish them to the people; and from the insufficiency of all his pains, to make them still regarded, or at all remembered; that the people themselves saw

[1] *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 174.

or suspected the cheat, and were tired with the repeated frauds of this kind, which their Bishops were imposing upon them. For it is not possible to conceive any other reason of so surprizing a coldness, in a case of all others the most warming, but a general persuasion, grounded on experience, that these pretended miracles were nothing else but forgeries, contrived to enforce some favorite doctrine or rite, which the rulers of the Church were desirous to establish.

Yet these are not the stories, which chiefly shock Mr. *Dodwell*, and oblige him to reject the miracles of the fourth Century; but others still more extravagant, though attested likewise by persons of equal eminence and authority; by St. *Athanasius*, St. *Gregory of Nyssa*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Epiphanius*, &c. Of which therefore, it will be necessary to add a specimen or two, from each of those Fathers.

St. *Athanasius*, in the Preface to his life of St. *Anthony* the Monk, declares, “that he had inserted nothing in it, but what he either knew to be true, having often seen the Saint himself, or what he had learnt from one, who had long ministered to him, and poured water upon his hands [1].” In this life then, after a great number of monstrous stories, concerning the personal conflicts, which this Saint

[1] Διὰ τὸ τοῦ ἀπέρι αὐτοῦ τε γινώσκω (πολλὰκις γὰρ αὐτὸν εἶρακα) καὶ ἃ μολῶν ἠδυνήθη παρὰ τῷ ἀεικέλευταιῷ αὐτῷ χρόνῳ καὶ ὀλίγον — γράψαι τῇ εὐλαβείᾳ ὑμῶν ἐσπέλασα. Oper. T. ii. p. 451. Edit. Par.

continually sustained with all the several Devils, and powers of Hell, who assaulted him in every shape, which could imprint terror; and exerted every art, and even corporal punishments, to drive him from the monastic life, which threatened the speedy ruin of their Kingdom, he tells us, “ that some body knocking one day at his
 “ Cell, *Anthony* went to the door, where he saw
 “ a tall meager person, who being asked his
 “ name, answered, *that he was Satan*. — His
 “ business, it seems, was to beg a truce of the
 “ Saint, and to expostulate with him, on account of the perpetual reproaches and curses,
 “ which the Monks so undeservedly bestowed
 “ on him, when he was no longer in condition
 “ to give them any trouble: for since the desert
 “ was now filled with Monks, and the Christians spread into all places, he was disarmed
 “ of all power to do them any mischief: so that
 “ the Christians had nothing more to do, but to take care of themselves, and to forbear their
 “ needless curses against him [1].” The rest of this piece is filled with many other miracles of the same stamp, too trifling to deserve any regard.

St. *Gregory of Nyssa*, in the life of his Name-fake, called the Wonder-worker, has this story, “ that the *Virgin Mary*, accompanied by St. *John* the Evangelist, appeared to *Gregory* in
 “ a vision, and explained to him the mystery of
 “ Godliness, in a short Creed or divine sum-

[1] *Ibid.* p. 476.

“ mary of faith, which he took down in writ-
 “ ing, as they dictated it to him, and left the
 “ copy of it, a legacy to the Church of *Neoca-*
 “ *sarea*, of which he was Bishop: and if any
 “ one, says he, has a mind to be satisfied of
 “ the truth of this, let him inquire of that
 “ Church, in which the very words, as they
 “ were written by his blessed hand, are preserv-
 “ ed to this day: which, for the excellency of
 “ the divine grace, may be compared with those
 “ tables of the law, made by God and delivered
 “ to *Moses* [1].”

Dr. *Waterland* has given us a translation of this Creed, and Dr. *Berriman*, an abstract of it; which is *as express as possible*, they say, *for the doctrine of the Trinity, as it was taught afterwards by Athanasius*. They both however intimate, that the genuineness of the Creed had been called in quæstion, though without any sufficient cause [2]. Yet the learned *Cave*, who for zeal, and orthodoxy, and facility of believing, was scarce inferior to any, declares, *that notwithstanding the authority of Gregory Nyssen, who was apt to be too credulous, this short exposition of the Christian faith will hardly find credit with prudent and sensible men* [3]. But whatever may be alledged to persuade us, that this Creed

[1] Vid. Greg. Nyss. Vit. Historic. Acc. of the Trini-
 S. Greg. Thaumaturg. p. tar. Controvers. p. 138, 141.
 97^o. Op. T. ii. Ed. Par.

[2] See Waterland. Im- [3] Vid. Histor. Literar.
 port. of the Doct. of the in Vita Greg. Thaumaturgi,
 Trin. p. 232. and Berrim. p. 132.

was actually professed and taught by *Gregory*, in his Church of *Neocæsarea*, yet no man surely but *Dr. Berriman*, could have any scruple to own, that the story of the vision, and of its delivery to him from heaven, was a forgery, contrived to support the *Athanasian doctrine*, at a time when it was warmly controverted, and in danger of being suppressed. But as the revelation of it, if admitted to be true, would put an end at once to all dispute, and give a divine sanction to the Doctrine itself, so the Doctor seems resolved not to part with: for in his *Historical account of the Trinitarian controversy*, speaking on this very point, he says, “there
 “are many arguments to convince us of the
 “genuineness and authority of this Creed of
 “*St. Gregory*: I do not mean of its being
 “taught him by revelation (*though that may be*
 “*well attested too, and will not seem incredible to*
 “*those, who shall consider, how highly this great*
 “*person was distinguished by the charismata, or*
 “*extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost*) but I
 “mean, as to the certainty of its having been
 “taught by *St. Gregory*,” &c. [1]. From which we see, that though his sole business in this place was, to prove the Creed to have been really *Gregory's*, yet he could not forbear to acquaint us, that, if there was occasion, he could prove *the revelation* also to be genuine: since it cannot enter his head, how any one should think it incredible, that, in those miraculous

[1] *Berrim. ibid. p. 138.*

ages, a person of *Gregory's* exalted character might be favored with a visit from heaven, by the *Virgin Mary* and *St. John the Apostle*.

The same *Gregory of Nyssa* relates likewise, “ how his Name-sake, being upon a journey, “ was forced one night to take shelter in an “ Heathen Temple, famed for an Oracle and “ and divination ; where the Demons used to “ appear visibly, and offer themselves to the “ Priests. But the holy Father, by invoking “ the name of *Jesus*, put them all to flight ; “ and by making the Sign of the Cross, purified the air, polluted by the steam of their “ sacrifices.—The next morning, when the “ Priest came to perform his usual functions, “ the Devils appeared, and acquainted him, “ that they had been driven out the night before “ by a stranger, and had not the power to return : nor was he able to recall them by all “ the charms of his expiatory sacrifices. Upon “ this, the Priest pursued *Gregory* in great “ wrath, and overtaking him on the road, “ threatened him most terribly, for what he had “ done. But *Gregory*, despising his threats, “ gave him to understand, that he had a power “ superior to that of Devils, and could drive “ them whithersoever he pleased. The Priest “ amazed at what he said, began to beg, that “ for a proof of his power, he would fetch them “ back again into the Temple ; to which *Gregory* consenting, wrote this short note onely, “ upon a schedule of paper, *Gregory to Satan*,
 S. 4 “ Enter.

“ *Enter.* With this the Priest was dismissed,
 “ and laying the little schedule upon the Altar,
 “ brought the Devils back again immediately
 “ to their old seats.” The miracle however,
 had the good effect of converting the Pagan
 Priest [1].

I have already given a passage from the Life
 of St. *Hilarion* the Monk, written by St. *Jerom*,
 as a specimen of the fidelity of the writer.—But
 for a proof of the fabulous genius of the fourth
 century, Mr. *Dodwell* refers us to another Life
 of *the Hermit Paul*, compiled by the same Fa-
 ther, which is filled with stories still more mon-
 strous; “ of *Satyrs* and *Fauns* presenting them-
 “ selves to the Hermit, and confessing their own
 “ mortality, and the folly of the Gentiles in
 “ paying them any worship, and begging his
 “ recommendation of them to their common
 “ Lord, who came to save the world: of a ra-
 “ ven bringing half a loaf for sixty years suc-
 “ cessively to the Hermit, for his daily food
 “ in the wilderness; and then a whole loaf,
 “ when St. *Anthony* came to visit him: of two
 “ Lions, coming to assist *Anthony* in the burial
 “ of *Paul*, by digging a grave for him with
 “ their feet, and then departing with the bles-
 “ sing of *Anthony* [2].”

St. *Epiphanius*, Bishop of *Salamis* in *Cyprus*,
 who is said to have wrought miracles himself,

[1] Vid. Greg. Nyss. *ibid.* p. 981. [2] Hieron. Vit.
 Pauli Eremit. Oper. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 71. Edit. Benedict.
 both

both in his life-time and after it [1], affirms several false and absurd miracles from his own knowledge, which his advocates gently pass over, by remarking onely, that *this most holy Father was too credulous, or not so accurate*, as we could wish [2]. He declares, “ that in imitation of our Saviour’s miracle at *Cana in Galilee*, several fountains and rivers in his days were annually turned into wine. A fountain of *Cibyra*, a city of *Caria*, says he, and another at *Gerasa* in *Arabia*, prove the truth of this. I myself have drunk out of the fountain of *Cibyra*, and my brethren out of the other at *Gerasa*: and many testify the same thing of the river *Nile* in *Egypt* [3].” Should we then be asked here, as we were before in a similar case, *Will ye not believe a most holy Bishop, in a fact attested by his own senses?* the answer is clear and short; *The fact is not credible.*

St. *Chrysestom*, celebrating the acts of the Martyr St. *Babylas*, Bishop of *Antioch*, says, “ the Gentiles will laugh, to hear me talk of the acts of persons dead, and buried, and con-

[1] Vid. Vit. Epiphani. c. 37, 66, &c. Op. Tom. ii. p. 350. Edit. Par.

[2] Quæ de Melchisedeci parentibus narrat Epiphanius, redolent apochryphorum somnia, ejusmodi multa sunt in hoc opere bona fide a Sanctissimo Patre descripta. Petav. Not. in pag. 217. T. ii.

Majori fide digna, quam quæ habet alia pleraque Pater ille parum accuratus. Dodw. Dissert. Iren. ii. § 29.

[3] Πετώκαμεν ἀπὸ τῆς Κυβύρης, ἡμέτεροι δὲ ἀδελφοὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν Γεράσει πηγῆς—καὶ πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ περὶ τῆς Νείλου τοῦτο μαρτυροῦσι. Adv. Hæres. l. ii. cxxx. p. 451. Tom. i.

“ fumed to duft ; but they are not to imagine,
 “ that the bodies of Martyrs, like to thofe of
 “ common men, are left deftitute of all active
 “ force and energy, fince a greater power than
 “ that of the human foul is fuperadded to them,
 “ the power of the Holy Spirit ; which, by
 “ working miracles in them, demonftrates the
 “ truth of the refurrection.” — He then pro-
 “ ceedes to inform us, “ how the remains of this
 “ Martyr were removed by a certain Emperor,
 “ out of the city of *Antioch* into a fuburb of it,
 “ called *Daphne*, famous for the delights of its
 “ fituation, and the variety of pleasures which
 “ it afforded to its inhabitants, as well as for a
 “ celebrated Temple and Oracle of *Apollo Daph-*
 “ *neus* ; to which the body of the Saint was
 “ thought proper to be removed, for the fake
 “ of giving fome check to the lewdnefs and li-
 “ centioufnefs that reigned in the place. The
 “ Coffin therefore was no fooner deposited, in a
 “ chapel provided for it, than the Oracle of *A-*
 “ *pollo* was ftruck dumb at once : fo that when
 “ *Julian* the Apoftate came afterwards to con-
 “ fult it, he could receive no other answer
 “ from *Apollo*, but that the dead would not fuffer
 “ him to fpeak any longer [1]. Wherefore *Julian*
 “ commanded the bones of *St. Babylas* to be

[1] “ By which answer “ Priests ufed to fpeak thro’
 “ we may underftand, fays “ a pipe, in delivering their
 “ Sir *J. Newton*, that fome “ Oracles.” See *Obfervat. on*
 “ Christian was got into the the Prophecies of *Daniel*, par.
 “ place, where the Heathen i. p. 210.

“ conveyed back again into *Antioch*; but in the
 “ very moment, when they entered into the
 “ city, the Statue of the God, and the roof of
 “ his Temple, were destroyed by lightning,
 “ upon the intercession of the Saint [1].” St.
Chrysoftom employs an entire Homily, and a
 larger discourse which follows it, in haranguing
 on this same subject of *Babylas*; and on the blef-
 sings and daily miracles, wrought by the re-
 liques of the Martyrs, to the edification of the
 Church, and the confusion of unbelievers [2].
 Yet his history of this Saint is so evidently fa-
 bulous and romantic, that the *Benedictin Monks*,
 who published the last and best edition of his
 works, found it necessary to admonish the rea-
 der, *that it is written in a declamatory style, over-*
flowing with rhetorical figures, and for the most
part destitute of truth [3]. In which those learn-
 ed Papists have shewn more candor, as well as
 judgement, than our Protestant Doctor *Cove*:
 who, in his Life of the same *Babylas*, after re-
 lating the particular story just described, which
 he calls *one of the most memorable occurrences, that*
Church Antiquity has conveyed to us, adds the fol-
 lowing attestation to it :

[1] Καὶ ὅτι ἐκ ἀπλῶς κρι-
 πάζον ταῦτα λέγω νῦν—ἰκανὰ
 μὲν τὸ λόγον πιστώσασθαι, καὶ τὰ
 καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἐπὶ τῶν
 Μαξύρων γυμνάσια θάμβουσι. Ib.
 p. 555.

[2] Vid. Oper. Tom. ii.
 p. 531, 533, 534, 564. &c.

[3] Argumentum libri, est
 historia Martyrii S. Babylæ—
 declamatorio more narrata,
 tropisque redundans; in qua
 plerumque veritatem desid-
 res. Admonit. in Serm. ibid.
 p. 530.

“ The reader, ’tis like, may be apt to scruple this story, as favouring a little of superstition, and giving too much honor to the reliques of Saints. To which I shall say no more, than that the credit of it seems unquestionable; it being reported not onely by *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, and *Theodoret*, who all lived very near that time, but by *Chrysoptom*, who was born at *Antioch*, and was a long time Presbyter of that Church, and was scholar there to *Libanius* the Sophist, at the very time when the thing was done, and an eye-witness of it; and who not onely preached the thing, but wrote a discourse against the Gentiles on this very subject; where he appeals to the knowledge both of young and old then alive, who had seen it, and challenges them to stand up and contradict, if they could, the truth of what he related. Nay, which farther puts the case past all peradventure, *Libanius* the Orator evidently confesses it,” &c. [1]: whereas all, which that Orator confesses, and which the *Benedictins* allow to be well grounded in the whole relation, is, that the reliques of *Babylas* were carried back again, by *Julian’s* order, out of *Daphne* into the City; and that the Temple of the *Daphnean Apollo* was soon after destroyed in the night by fire; which the Christians declared to have been sent from heaven by the power of the Saint; and the Heathens

[1] See his Lives of the Prim. Fathers. Life of *Babyl.* Vol. i. p. 247.

ascribed to the revenge and contrivance of the Christians [1].

A Popish writer, with whom I have been engaged, in order to reprove my raillery on their fictitious Saints and Image-worship, has alledged also a most notable miracle, from this fourth century; which I shall here add to the Specimens already given.

“ When *Julian the Apostate* was pursuing his
 “ *Persian* expedition, and at the very time,
 “ when he is supposed to have been destroyed
 “ by the immediate hand of God, the great St.
 “ *Basil* was standing before the *Image of the*
 “ *Blessed Virgin*, on which there was painted
 “ likewise the figure of St. *Mercurius*, an emi-
 “ nent Martyr: and while St. *Basil* was fer-
 “ vently praying, that the impious and atheisti-
 “ cal *Julian* might be cut off, he received this
 “ revelation from the picture; out of which the
 “ figure of the Martyr quite vanished for a lit-
 “ tle while, but presently appeared again, and
 “ held out a *bloody spear*; as a token of what

[1] *Julian* suspected the Christians to have set fire to this Temple, on the account of his removal of the body of St. *Babylas*: for which reason, he ordered some of them to be put to the rack, and their great Church in *Antioch* to be shut up; as we are told by *Anthemianus Marcellinus*: who mentions another report also, though more

slightly grounded, of a different cause of that accident. [l. xxii. c. 13. Vid. it. *Julian. Misopogon. Oper. T. i. p. 361. Edit. Spanh. 1696.*] The Christians, says *Sozomen*, took the fire to be sent from heaven, at the request of the Martyr, but the Gentiles look upon it as the act of the Christians. Lib. v. c. 20.

“ had

“ had happened in the same moment to *Julian* [1].”

But *Julian's* death was foretold likewise by *visions*, and *divine revelations*, as the Ecclesiastical writers inform us, to several other Saints and holy men, in different parts of the world, who were severally addressing their prayers to God for his destruction [2]. Whence we cannot but observe, what a total change there was, both of principles and practice, between the Fathers of the fourth, and those of the preceding ages; or between the Church when persecuted, and when established in power and authority. For in the earlier times, under the very worst of the Heathen Emperors, and the cruellest persecutors of the Church, when the Christians were treated every where as traitors to the government, all their Apologists, through the three first centuries, declare with one voice, that they were obliged by the precepts of their religion, to be of all men the most loyal to their princes, and that it was their daily practice, to put up their united prayers for their prosperity. We pray, says *Tertullian*, for every Emperor; that he may have a long life, secure reign, a safe house,

[1] Ἐξ ἧς ἀνύσθη μνήμη ταύτην τὴν ἀποκαλιψιν ἴδωσι γὰρ πρὸς μὲν βραχυῶ ἀραῆ τὸν μάρτυρα, μετ' ἑποικὸν δὲ, τὸ δόξου ἡμαγμένον κατέχοισι. *Joh. Damascen. Oper. T. i. p. 327.*
E. Edit. Par. pr. Lequien.

have been recorded by *Helladius*, the disciple and successor of *St. Basil*, in the Bishoprick of *Cæsarea*, in the Life which he wrote of *St. Basil*.

[2] Vid. *Sozom. l. vi. c. 2.*

N. B. This story is said to

strong

strong armies, faithful senate, honest people, a quiet world, and whatsoever else, man, or Cæsar himself, can wish [1]. Yet, after the Church had gained a firm establishment, its temper was quite altered; and the Emperors no sooner began to give them any disturbance, than their prayers were turned into curses; and the divine vengeance confessedly implored to destroy them. So true it is, what all the Popish writers have not scrupled to affirm, from *Pope Gregory the Great*, down to *Cardinal Bellarmino*, that it was not the want of will, but of the power only to rebel, which made the primitive Christians so patient under the persecuting Emperors, and particularly under *Julian*, because the Church had not yet acquired strength enough, to controul the Princes of the earth [2].

Now it is agreed by all, that these Fathers, whose testimonies I have just been reciting, were the most eminent lights of the fourth century; all of them fainted by the Catholic Church; and highly revered at this day in all Churches, for their piety, probity, and learning: yet, from

[1] "Ὅθεν θεὸν μὴ μόνον προσκυνῶμεν. ἐμῶν δὲ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα χαίρειναις ὑπηρετοῦμεν καὶ εὐχόμενοι μὴ τῆς βασιλικῆς δυναμείως καὶ σίφει να τὸν λόγιον ἐχούσας ἡμᾶς εὐεθῆναι. *Just. Martyr. Apol. i. p. 26.*

Oramus pro omnibus Imperatoribus, vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum— & quæcunque hominis, & Cæ-

faris vota sunt. *Apolog. § 30.*

Deprecamur diebus ac noctibus & pro salute populi, & pro statu Imperatorum vestrorum. *Vid. Act. Passion. Cyprian. apud Cyprian. p. 16. Edit. Rigaltii.*

[2] See *Chillingworth's Works*, 7th Edit. p. 283. & *Not. **.

the specimens of them, above given, it is evident, that they would not scruple, to propagate any fiction, how gross soever, which served to promote the interest, either of Christianity in general, or of any particular rite or doctrine, which they were desirous to recommend. St. *Jerom* in effect confesses it; for after the mention of a silly story, concerning the Christians of *Jerusalem*, who used to shew, in the ruins of the Temple, *certain stones of a reddish color*, which they pretended to have been stained by the blood of *Zacharias, the son of Barackias, who was slain between the Temple and the Altar*; he adds, *but I do not find fault with an error, which flows from an hatred of the Jews, and a pious zeal for the Christian faith* [1].

[1] Non condemnamus errorem, qui de odio Judæorum, & fidei pietate descendit. Oper. T. iv. p. 113.

N. B. The same *Jerom*, speaking in another place, of the different manner, which writers found themselves obliged to use, in their controversial and their dogmatical writings, intimates, that in controversy, whose end was victory rather than truth, it was allowable, to employ every artifice, which would best serve to conquer an adversary: in proof of which, *Origen*, says he, *Methodius*, *Eusebius*, *Apollinaris*, have written many thousands of

“ lines, against *Celsus* and *Porphyry*: consider with what arguments and what slippery problems, they baffle what was contrived against them by the Spirit of the Devil: and because they are sometimes forced to speak, they speak not what they think, but what is necessary, against those, who are called Gentiles. I do not mention the latin writers, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Minutius*, *Victorinus*, *Lactantius*, *Hilarius*, lest I be thought, not so much to be defending myself, as accusing others.” Op. T. iv. p. 236.

If the miracles then of the fourth century, so solemnly attested by the most celebrated and revered Fathers of the Church, are to be rejected after all as fabulous, it must needs give a fatal blow to the credit of all the miracles even of the preceding centuries; since there is not a single Father, whom I have mentioned in this fourth age, who, for zeal and piety, may not be compared with the best of the more ancient, and for knowledge and learning, be preferred to them all. For instance, there was not a person in all the primitive Church, more highly respected in his own days, than St. *Epiphanius*, for the purity of his life, as well as the extent of his learning. He was a Master of *five languages*, and has left behind him one of the most useful works, which remain to us from antiquity. St. *Jerom*, who personally knew him, calls him, *the Father of all Bishops, and a shining Star among them; the pattern of ancient sanctity; the man of God of blessed memory; to whom the people used to flock in crowds, offering their little children to his benediction; kissing his feet; and catching the hem of his garment* [1].

All the rest were men of the same character, who spent their lives and studies in propagating the faith, and in combating the vices and hæresies of their times. Yet none of them have scrupled, we see, to pledge their faith for the truth of facts, which no man of sense can believe, and which their warmest admirers are

[1] Oper. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 312. 313, 417, 443. 727.

forced to give up as fabulous. If such persons then could wilfully attempt to deceive; and if the sanctity of their characters cannot assure us of their fidelity; what better security can we have from those who lived before them? or what cure for our Scepticism, with regard to any of the miracles above mentioned? was the first assertor of them, *Justin Martyr*, more pious, cautious, learned, judicious, or less credulous, than *Epiphanius*? or were those virtues more conspicuous in *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Arnobius*, and *Lactantius*, than in *Athanasius*, *Gregory*, *Chrysostom*, *Jerom*, *Austin*? Nobody, I dare say, will venture to affirm it. If these later Fathers then, biassed by a false zeal or interest, could be tempted to propagate a known lie; or, with all their learning and knowledge, could be so weakly credulous, as to believe the absurd stories which they themselves attest; there must always be reason to suspect, that the same prejudices would operate, even more strongly, in the earlier Fathers; prompted by the same zeal and the same interests, yet indued with less learning, less judgement, and more credulity.

But whatever light the fourth Century may give us, in discovering the real character of the earlier ages, it affords us at least a sure presage of what we are to expect from the fifth, into which we are now entering. Dr. *Waterland* himself allows, on the authority of *Nazianzen*, that the state of the Church towards the end of the
fourth

fourth century was become very corrupt [1]: for that reason, as we have elsewhere seen, he durst not venture to appeal, in the case of its miracles, to any of the celebrated Fathers above mentioned, as being evidently infected with that corruption. The learned *Mosheim* also, a foreign Divine, and zealous advocate of Christianity, who, by his writings against the Freethinkers, as Dr. *Chapman* tells us, *has deserved the esteem of all good and learned men*, intimates his fears, “ that
 “ those, who search with any attention into the
 “ writings of the greatest and most holy Doc-
 “ tors of the fourth century, will find them all,
 “ without exception, disposed to deceive and to
 “ lie, whenever the interest of religion requires
 “ it [2].” Since the degeneracy therefore of this age has obliged the most devoted admirers of antiquity, not only to suspect, but to reject its miracles as spurious, we cannot be at a loss, what judgement we ought to form on the miracles of the following age, which is allowed by all to have been still more corrupt.

The succeeding Fathers, however, go on still as before, to assert the same miraculous gifts, and even more of them to the fifth, than to any of the preceding ages. Whence a certain infidel writer has taken occasion to censure the credit of Ecclesiastical History, as being *full of miracles, wrought by such madmen* as Simeon Stylites [3], a

[1] Import. of the Doct. cellan. Tracts, p. 191, 207.
 of the Trin. p. 424. [3] See Christianity as old

[2] See Dr. Chapm. Mis- as the Creat. c. viii. p. 89.

Monk of the fifth century ; who spent the greatest part of his life on the top of a pillar, from which he drew his surname ; and whose wonderful acts are particularly related by *Theodoret*. Now whether this *Symeon* was a madman or not, the credit of Christianity is no way affected by it. The History of the Gospel, I hope, may be true, though the History of the Church be fabulous. And if the ecclesiastic Historians have recorded many silly fictions, under the name of miracles, as they undoubtedly have, the blame must be charged to the writers, not to their religion. But the censure came from an Infidel, and for that reason, was at all events to be confuted ; since, to allow a grain of truth to one of that class, is to betray the cause of Christianity, and to strengthen the hands of its enemies.

This is the principle, which generally animates the zeal, and glares through the writings of the modern advocates of our religion : and which in reality, has done more hurt and discredit to it, than all the attacks of its open adversaries : and it was the same principle, without doubt, that gave birth to the defence of *Simeon Stylites*, which Dr. *Chapman*, in his remarks on the Author referred to, has thought fit to attempt in the following words :

“ I know our Author too well, to take his
 “ judgement either of madness or sense. ’Tis
 “ more than probable, that it is madness with
 “ him, to believe any miracles at all, of any per-
 “ son, or at any time. So that we are not to
 “ wonder,

“ wonder, if *Simeon* and his miracles have no
“ sort of credit with him. For this reason I ad-
“ dress myself here, not to him, but to those
“ who distinguish between truth and imposture,
“ between clear and indisputable evidence, and
“ that which is dark and suspicious. The great
“ *Theodoret*, whose character for sense, learning,
“ and piety, is abundantly known and confessed,
“ was himself contemporary with *Simeon Stylites*,
“ was personally and intimately acquainted with
“ him, conversed with him for many years to-
“ gether, and declares himself an eye-witness to
“ the wonderful things related of him. He has
“ given us an account of a great part of his
“ Life, which he wrote while *Simeon* was yet
“ alive, and appeals to all the world for the
“ truth of what he says of him. He farther tells
“ us, that *Simeon* by his miracles converted many
“ thousands of Pagans, especially the *Ismaelites*,
“ or *Saracens*, to the Christian religion; that he
“ himself, at *Simeon's* desire, gave many of them
“ the Sacerdotal benediction, and was in mani-
“ fest danger of losing his life, by the impa-
“ tience and eagerness of the Barbarians to re-
“ ceive it from him. If we may not admit such
“ evidence as this, in proof of a matter of fact,
“ I am afraid, we must shake the evidence of
“ all human testimony; and believe nothing,
“ but what we see, and feel, and know our-
“ selves. Nay farther, our Author cannot
“ prove, that there ever existed such a man as
“ *Simeon Stylites*, by better evidence, than that

“ which I have produced, to prove his miracles [1].”

Here we see what a sort of character and language is prepared for those, who dare to reject the miracles of *Symeon*. They must be men, who *know not how to distinguish between truth and imposture; between indisputable and suspicious evidence; who shake the credit of all human testimony, and believe nothing, but what they see themselves.* And all this assurance is grounded on the single testimony of *Theodoret*, to whom, in order to enhance his authority, he has added, according to his usual way, the title of *the Great*. But as the Doctor has carried his defence of Monks and their miracles much farther, than any other Protestant, I believe, would venture to do, so it was natural to suspect, that he had been drawn into it by some Popish writer, of whom he had conceived a favorable opinion; and we find accordingly, that he has borrowed, not onely his notions, but his very expressions from *Monf. Tillemont*, who talks in the same pompous strain, of *Le Grand Theodoret, whose evidence cannot be slighted, he says, without shaking the credit of all human testimony* [2].

But let him borrow them from whomsoever he pleases; my business is, to inquire onely whether, what he has borrowed and so peremptorily affirmed, be true, or credible, or fit for a Protestant Divine, to impose upon the consciences

[1] See *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 165.
Mem. vol. xv. p. 348.

[2] See *Tillem.*

of Christians. This therefore is the point, which I shall now proceed to consider, from the authority of those very testimonies, to which he himself has referred us.

We are told then by *Theodoret*, “ That this
 “ *Symeon* spent the first part of his life in certain
 “ Monasteries near *Antioch* in *Syria*, mortifying
 “ his body by horrible austerities, not onely be-
 “ yond the rules of their ordinary discipline, but
 “ above the force even of nature itself; till for
 “ his perseverance in these extravagancies, con-
 “ trary to the Admonitions of his rulers, he was
 “ turned out of the society, as giving an exam-
 “ ple, that might be dangerous or fatal to those,
 “ who attempted to imitate it. Upon this he
 “ retired to a separate Cave or Hut, where he
 “ took a fancy, after the example of *Moses* and
 “ *Elias*, to keep a fast and total abstinence from
 “ food, for forty intire days. But when another
 “ holy man called *Bassus*, represented to him the
 “ danger and even sin of an attempt, which
 “ would probably destroy him, he complied so
 “ far, as to suffer ten loaves, and a pitcher of
 “ water to be immured with him in his cell,
 “ with a promise to make use of them, if he
 “ happened to want any refreshment. *Bassus*
 “ then closed up his door with mud, and left
 “ him for forty days; at the end of which, he
 “ returned, and clearing away the mud from the
 “ door, found the ten loaves intire, and the
 “ pitcher also full, but *Symeon* stretched upon
 “ the ground, quite spiritless and unable to

“ speak or stir, till by the care of his friend, and
 “ the application of the symbols of the holy
 “ mysteries, he was gradually restored to his
 “ strength and former health. From which
 “ time, as *Theodoret* adds, he had then perfe-
 “ vered twenty eight years, in the same practice
 “ of fasting forty days in each year. During the
 “ first part of which days, he used constantly to
 “ stand: and when through want of nourish-
 “ ment he grew too weak to endure that posture,
 “ he then began to sit; but at the last, was
 “ forced to lie down half dead and almost
 “ spent [1].”

His next whim was, “ To fix his perpetual
 “ station on the top of a pillar, whose circum-
 “ ference was hardly of two cubits; and after
 “ he had spent many years in that position, like
 “ a statue upon its pedestal, on several different
 “ pillars, he mounted one at last, thirty six cu-
 “ bits high, and lived thirty years upon it: be-
 “ ing placed in the middle region, as it were,
 “ between heaven and earth; where he con-
 “ versed with God, and glorified him with An-
 “ gels; offering up for the men on earth his
 “ supplications to God, and drawing down from
 “ heaven the blessings of God upon men [2].”
 But because these pillars allowed no other po-
 sture but that of standing, he contrived a me-
 thod, which enabled him to endure still the fa-
 tigue of his usual fasts. “ For he got a beam

[1] Vid. *Theodoret. Religios. Histor. p. 880. Oper. T. iii. Edit. Paris.*

[2] *Ibid. p. 887.*

“ fixed to the top of his pillar, to which he tied
“ himself, and by that support held out the
“ whole forty days without changing his po-
“ sition ; till being strengthened by heaven with
“ a larger measure of grace, he no longer want-
“ ed that help, but stood all the time, without
“ tasting the least food, yet with ease and cheer-
“ fulness [1].”

The manner of passing his time on the pillar was this ; “ all the nights and days also, till
“ three in the afternoon, were spent by him in
“ prayer, in which he used continual bowings
“ of his body, and always touched his very toes
“ with his head. For this, says *Theodoret*, was
“ easy to him, because he made but one meal in
“ the week, and that a very light one, so that
“ his belly being generally empty, gave him no
“ obstruction in bending his back. One of
“ those who stood by, looking upon him with
“ *Theodoret*, had the curiosity to count the num-
“ ber of his bowings, but when he had counted
“ to twelve hundred and forty four, he was tired
“ and would count them no longer [2]. On
“ solemn Festivals, he stood with his hands
“ stretched out towards heaven, from the set-
“ ting of the Sun, to its rising, without a wink
“ of sleep the whole night [3].

“ From three in the afternoon it was his
“ practice, to preach and to give divine lectures ;
“ to answer all questions and petitions, which
“ were offered to him ; to cure diseases, and to

[1] Ibid. 820.

[2] Ibid. 837. A.

[3] Ibid. D.

“ compose

“ compose differences ; but at Sun-setting he
 “ began to converse again with God [1]. He
 “ wrought innumerable miracles ; giving health
 “ to the sick, children to the barren ; and dis-
 “ pensing sacred oil to those likewise who de-
 “ sired it [2].” To many of which miracles
Theodoret declares himself to have been an eye-
 witness, as well as to his gift of prophecy, for
 he heard “ him foretell a famine and a pestilence,
 “ and an irruption of locusts, and the death of
 “ one of *Theodoret’s* enemies, fifteen days before
 “ it happened [3]. One of the miracles, which
 “ *Theodoret* saw, was this ; an eminent *Ismaelite*
 “ and believer in Christ, made a vow to God in
 “ the presence of *Symeon*, that he would abstain
 “ from all animal food during the rest of his
 “ life : but being tempted afterwards to break
 “ his vow, he resolved to eat a fowl, and or-
 “ dered it to be dressed for him accordingly ;
 “ but when he sat down to eat, he found the flesh
 “ of it turned into stone. The Barbarian,
 “ amazed at this miracle, ran away in all hast
 “ to the Saint, proclaiming his secret crime to
 “ all people, and imploring the Saint, by the
 “ omnipotence of his prayers, to release him
 “ from the bond of this sin. There were many
 “ eye-witnesses of this miracle, who handled the
 “ fowl, and found the part of it about the breast,
 “ to be compounded of bone and of stone [4].”

[1] *Ibid.* 188. B. [2] *Ib.* 885, 886, &c. [3] *Ib.* 885.

[4] *Ibid.* B.

By these miracles and austerities, the fame of *Symeon*, as *Theodoret* says, was spread through the whole world: so that people of all nations and languages flocked to him in crouds from the remotest parts of the earth; from *Spain* and *Gaul*, and even *Britain* itself; and his name was so celebrated at *Rome*, that the Artificers of all kinds had little images of him, placed in the entrance of their shops, as a guard and security to them against all sorts of mischief [1].

This is the account in short of the Life of *Symeon Stylites*: the bare recital of which, tho' attested by ten *Theodorets*, must needs expose the absurdity of believing, that it could in any manner be suggested or directed by divine inspiration. Yet *Dr. Chapman* contends, that there is no better evidence for the very existence of *Symeon*, than we have for his miracles [2]. By which he means, I suppose, that we have the same evidence for both; the testimony of the same *Theodoret*, which he imagines to be as good in the one case, as in the other: not reflecting, that the same witness, of whatever character he be, will necessarily find a very different degree of credit, according to the different nature of the facts, which he attests; and though credible in some, may be justly contemptible in others. For example, when we are told by *Theodoret*, and after him by *Evagrius*, that a certain Monk called *Symeon*, who was personally known to them, took a fancy to live upon a pillar, where

[1] 88. A.

[2] Miscell. Tracts, p. 167.

he was seen every day by many thousands; we have no reason to doubt of it; the thing was notorious, and there were many such Enthusiasts in the same age; and every one of those thousands, who saw him, were as good witnesses of it, as *Theodoret* himself. But when we are told by the same writers, that *Symeon was inspired by God, and performed many things above the force of human nature*: this is a different case, which cannot command the same belief; being a matter of opinion, rather than of fact; of which very few could judge, fewer still be certain, and scarce one perhaps of all the thousands, who saw him, could be a competent witness: while the character of *Symeon* on the one side, and of *Theodoret* on the other, suggest many obvious reasons against the credibility of it.

To illustrate this more clearly by a similar instance from profane history. Two classical writers of undoubted credit, *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*, have each written the Life and acts of the Emperor *Vespasian*: who alone, they say, of all the Princes before him, was made a better man, by his advancement to the Empire [1]. But the same writers also declare, that this good Emperor, by a divine admonition from the God *Serapis*, publicly restored a blind man to his sight, and a cripple to his limbs, in the view of the people of *Alexandria*: and that many years after his death, when there was no reward or temptation for telling such a lie,

[1] Solusque omnium ante se Principum, in melius mutatus est. Tacit. Hist. l. i. c. 50.

several witnesses were still living, who had seen those miracles performed, and bore testimony to the truth of them [1]. Now it is certain, that no body in any age, ever doubted of the existence of *Vespasian*, yet many probably in all, and every single man in the present, not onely doubt, but reject the story of his miracles: though these last be affirmed by the same writers, who assure us of the first: to whose authority still we pay all the regard, that is due, by believing them in every thing, that is credible; in every thing, of which they were competent witnesses; and charging the absurd and fabulous part, to the superstition, prejudices, and false principles, which prevailed in those ages.

The case is the same with *Theodoret* and all the Ecclesiastical Historians, who have transmitted to us the Lives and miracles of the Monks, and other pious men of their own times. We take their word, as far as reason and religion will permit us; and ascribe the rest to the credulity, the prejudices, and erroneous principles, which infected all the writers of those days. The Romanists indeed roundly embrace and espouse all the absurd and fictitious stories, which they have delivered to us; and are under a necessity of doing so, since they teach the same corrupt

[1] E plebe quidam luminibus orbatus, item alius debili crure, sedentem pro tribunali pariter adierunt, orantes opem valetudinis, demonstratam a *Serapide* per

quietem, &c. Sueton. in Vit. c. 7.

Utrumque qui interfuere, nunc quoque memorant, postquam nullum mendacio pretium. Tacit. Hist. l. iv. c. 81. doctrines,

doctrines, retain the same superstitious rites, and exercise the same usurped powers, for the sake of which, those very stories were originally forged. But no Protestants, as far as I have observed, except the two Doctors abovementioned, have ever attempted to defend either the miracles, or the principles of the fifth century; but on the contrary, have constantly signified either their suspicion, or utter contempt of them.

Mr. *Dodwell*, whose piety and zeal for the honor of Christianity were as conspicuous as his learning, declares, “ That nothing does so
 “ much discredit to the cause of miracles in ge-
 “ neral, among the Infidels and Atheists, as the
 “ impostures of the later ages; meaning the
 “ fourth, fifth, and following centuries. These,
 “ says he, they oppose to the undoubted credit
 “ of the earlier ages; and because these false
 “ prodigies deceived the whole world, they in-
 “ fer, that the ancient ones likewise, though
 “ false, might impose in the same manner upon
 “ the credulity of mankind [1].”

Dr. *Cave*, the large extent of whose faith shines through every page of his writings, yet plainly intimates his suspicion, of what *Theodoret* has attested concerning this very *Symeon*: for speaking of the amazing austerities, which he practised, he adds, *moreover, if the Greek writers*

[1] Atqui nihil est quod quam recentiorum Fabulato-
 miraculorum causæ universæ rum *τερατισματα*, &c. *Dodw.*
 apud Atheos magis noceat, *Dissert. Iren. ii. § 69.*

are to be regarded, be wrought innumerable miracles [1].

Mr. Collier also, whose Ecclesiastical History shews, that miracles even of the grossest kind were of no hard digestion with him, could not yet digest these of our *Symeon*, but declares them to be wholly *fabulous, and such, as render the truth itself suspected* [2].

Dr. *Hody*, so highly esteemed for his critical and theological learning, observes, “ that stories
“ concerning miracles are common to all the
“ writers of Lives, among the Christians of the
“ middle ages, though otherwise good authors:
“ and that the professed Historians themselves,
“ as *Theodoret* and *Evagrius*, are full of re-
“ lations; which were the result of a superstiti-
“ ous piety [3].

Since the most learned then, as well as orthodox of our Divines, and the most conversant also in Ecclesiastical antiquity, have so strongly signified their distrust, both of the testimony of *Theodoret*, and the particular acts of this *Symeon*, it is surprizing, that Dr. *Champan* should think it of service to Christianity, to lay so great a stress upon them, and in so peremptory a manner, to vindicate the credit of miracles, whose sole tendency is to recommend, as a perfect pattern of the Christian life, the most extravagant enthusiasm and contemptible superstition, that any

[1] *Histor. Litterar.* T. i. p. 439. [2] See *Dictionar.* in *Symeon. Styl.* [3] *The Case of Sees vacated by an unjust deprivation,* c. x. p. 120.

age or history perhaps has ever produced. For that this was really the case, is evident from the writings of *Theodoret* himself, whose *Life of Symeon Stylites*, is a part onely of his *religious history*, as it is called; filled with the *Lives of thirty Monks*, of the same class and character; distinguished by their peculiar austerities; and vying with each other, who could invent the most whimsical methods and painful arts of mortifying their bodies.

One of these called *Baradatus*, contrived a sort of cage for his habitation, coarsly formed of lattice work, so wide and open, as to expose him to all the inclemencies of the weather, and so low at the same time, that it could not admit the full height of his body, but obliged him to stand always in the posture of stooping [1].

Another of them called *Thalaleus*, of a very bulky size, suspended himself in the air, in a cage of a different kind, contrived by himself, and made so low and so strait also, that it left him no more room, than to sit with his head perpetually bent down between his knees; in which posture, he had spent ten years, when *Theodoret* first saw him [2]. Yet all these ridiculous whims and extravagancies are considered by *Theodoret*, as the suggestions of the holy Spirit [3], and divine inventions, to baffle the artifices of the Devil; or so many ladders, as he tells us, by

[1] *Histor. Religiof. c. xxvii.*

[2] *Ibid. c. xxviii.*

[3] Ἐγὼ δὲ τῆς θείας ἀνευ εἰκονομίας ταύτην πεισῶ γενέσθαι τὴν σάσιν. *ib. p. 882. B.*

which they mounted up to heaven [1]; and which were all confirmed by miracles, as a proof of the divine approbation.

These were the wonder-workers, and these the miracles of the fifth century: the character of which Dr. *Chapman* sums up to this effect in the following articles.

1. That they were of a public nature, and performed in such a manner, as left no room for delusion.

2. That they were attended with beneficial effects, which could not possibly have gained credit, unless the strongest evidence of sense had proved them to be true.

3. That the end of them was not to confirm any idle errors or superstitions, but purely to advance the glory of truth and virtue.

4. That the accounts of them are given by men of unquestionable integrity, piety, and learning, who were eye-witnesses of many of the facts, and declare in the most solemn manner, that they knew them to be true.

5. That they were far from being vain and unnecessary, so as to render them doubtful to after ages — but were attested by the strongest moral evidence, equal to that, by which most of the antient miracles are supported.

6. That they are incapable of giving any countenance to the fabulous pretences of the Papists: and that a protestant of common capa-

[1] Καὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας οἱ πολλὰς ἐκ διαφόρων ἐπισημασάντων
περίφηρον τῆς εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνόδου κλίμακος. *Ib.* p. 839. A

city will discern as much difference between them and the Popish miracles, as between gold and brass, between light and darkness [1].

Yet from the short specimen of these miracles already given, and much more, from a full list of them, which, if it were required, may hereafter be given, the very contrary character of them, I am persuaded, will appear to be the true one, to all unprejudiced readers, in every one of those articles.

1. That they were all of such a nature, and performed in such a manner, as would necessarily inject a suspicion of fraud and delusion.

2. That the cures and beneficial effects of them, were either false, or imaginary, or accidental.

3. That they tend to confirm the idlest of all errors and superstitions.

4. That the integrity of the witnesses is either highly questionable, or their credulity at least so gross, as to render them unworthy of any credit.

5. That they were not onely vain and unnecessary, but generally speaking, so trifling also, as to excite nothing but contempt.

And lastly, that the belief and defence of them, are the onely means in the world, that can possibly support, or that does in fact give any sort of countenance, to the modern impostures in the Romish Church.

Then as to the Monks also, who are said to have wrought those miracles, the Doctor is not

[1] Miscell. Tracts, p. 175, &c.

less zealous in defending and extolling all their extravagances. He declares, “ that they were
“ intended for the best and most excellent pur-
“ poses [1]. That all the friends to Christiani-
“ ty must think, that in their voluntary auste-
“ rities, they shewed such prudence, virtue, and
“ greatness of mind, as deserve the highest en-
“ comiums of posterity [2]. And that the an-
“ cient Monasteries were very different from the
“ modern; quite remote from the corruptions
“ of Popery, and deserving the approbation of
“ the strictest Protestants [3].” Yet for my
own part, notwithstanding all his panegyric on
those primitive Monks and monasteries, I shall
not scruple to own, 1st, That I look upon the
whole institution of monkery, from what age or
what Saint soever it drew its origin, to be con-
trary not onely to the principles of the Gospel,
but to the interests of all civil society; and the
chief source of all the corruptions, which have
ever since infested the Christian Church. 2dly,
That by all, which I have ever read of the old,
and have seen of the modern Monks, I take the
preference to be clearly due to the last, as hav-
ing a more regular discipline, more good learn-
ing, and less superstition among them, than the
first [4].

[1] *Ibid.* p. 162.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 165.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 180, 181.

[4] Sir *Isaac Newton* has shewn, that the Monks are the spawn and genuine off-

spring of those Heretics, who, in the second and third centuries, affected an extraordinary strictness of life; forbidding to marry, and to eat the flesh of animals; and prac-

Before we take leave of this subject, I shall just add a word or two concerning the character of *Theoderet* himself, to whose testimony Dr. *Chapman* pays so extraordinary a regard, and whose authority he declares to be decisive in the case before us. The learned *Monf. Du Pin*, in his account of him, extracted from his writings, says, “ that he was born at *Antioch*, “ A. D. 386, that his birth was accompanied “ by miracles, both before and after it, which

tising many absurd austerities of fastings, and watchings, which they enjoined as necessary to all Christians; whose doctrines and practices were rejected and condemned by all the Churches of those ages. But certain Enthusiasts, near the beginning of the fourth century, possessed with the same principles, yet with some little refinement and correction of them, retired into the deserts, where they spent their lives with an high reputation of sanctity, in exercises of devotion and divine contemplation; not imposing the same severities on all, as their predecessors, the Heretics had done, but on those onely, who voluntarily preferred the same monastic life. These therefore began to be highly revered, and before the end of the fourth century, increased so

fast, that they overflowed both the Greek and the Latin Church like a torrent: especially when *Constantin* the Great professed to esteem and honor them above all Christians; being persuaded, as *Eusebius* tells us, that God did surely dwell in those souls, who had devoted themselves entirely to his service. In *Ægypt* therefore, where this enthusiasm principally reigned, a third part of the people are said to have betaken themselves to the deserts: whence they soon spread themselves through the Christian world; and were the ringleaders in establishing the worship of *Saints*, and *reliques*, and all those other Superstitions, with which the fourth, and all succeeding centuries, ever after abounded. *Observat. on the Proph. of Dan. par. i. c. 13.*

“ he himself relates in his religious history :
 “ that, *if we may believe him*, his mother was
 “ healed of an incurable disease in her eye, by
 “ one *Peter* a Monk : that, upon the prayers of
 “ another Monk, called *Macedonius*, God grant-
 “ ed her to conceive a son, after thirteen years
 “ of barrenness, and to bring him safely into the
 “ world : that by the prayers of the first of those
 “ Monks, *Peter*, she was preserved also from
 “ death after her delivery : and that her hus-
 “ band and her son had often felt the effects of
 “ *Peter’s* virtue and sanctity, and were cured of
 “ their distempers, by touching onely his gir-
 “ dle [1].”

This account, I say, is drawn from *Theodoret* himself; whence we learn, that he was nursed and trained in all the bigotry and superstition, with which that age abounded : taught from his very cradle, to venerate Monks and their miracles : and made to believe, with the first knowledge which he received, that he owed his very existence to the efficacy of their prayers. He tells us, “ that his mother sent him once every
 “ week to beg the blessing of the Monk *Peter* ;
 “ and that he went as often also to receive the in-
 “ structions and benediction of the other Monk,
 “ *Macedonius* ; who never failed to remind him,
 “ of the great pains which it had cost, to bring
 “ him into the world, and how many nights he
 “ had spent in praying to God for nothing else,

[1] See Du Pin’s account of *Theodoret*, Vol. iv. p. 55.

“but his birth [1].” And as *Theodoret* is said to have been very tenacious of the principles, which he had once imbibed [2], so it was his constant practice, through his whole life, to visit the cells and habitations of all the celebrated Monks of those times; with whose lives and miracles he has filled his *religious history*: from which I shall here transcribe a story or two, out of the great number which he has recorded, of the same sort, and of his own knowledge, as a specimen both of the judgement and the fidelity of the compiler.

In his life of the Monk *Peter*, he declares, “that his very garments wrought wonders, like “to those of *St. Paul*: which I do not mention, “says he, by way of hyperbole, but with the “testimony of truth for what I am saying. For “his girdle made of coarse linen, being very “broad and long, he cut it into two parts, with “the one of which he girded his own loins, and “mine with the other. This last my mother “has often applied to me and to my Father, “when we were sick, and driven away our distempers by it; and made use of it also herself, as a remedy for her own health. Many “of our acquaintance, who knew this, frequently borrowed the girdle, for the service of “other sick people, and always found the same

[1] Vid. *Theodor. Hist. Religios.* c. ix. p. 821. E. it. *juriarum & contradictionum* c. xiii. p. 840. D. 839. D. *haud fatis patiens, &c. Cave*

[2] *Animo erat excelfo & Hist. Litt. de Theodorit. T. elato; sententia, quam semel i p. 406.*

“ good effects of its virtue : till a certain per-
 “ son, who borrowed it, ungrateful to his bene-
 “ factors, never restored it, and so we were de-
 “ prived of the benefit of this gift [1].”

In the life of another Monk, called *James*, he tells this story, “ that the reliques of some of
 “ the ancient *Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles,*
 “ were brought to him in a chest from *Phœnicia*
 “ and *Palestine,* and received by a public pro-
 “ cession of all the orders of the Clergy and the
 “ Laity. But the Monk *James* did not think
 “ fit to assist at this solemnity, having conceived
 “ some doubts, it seems, whether the reliques,
 “ said to be *John Baptist’s,* were really so or
 “ not. Upon which, in the night following,
 “ as he was praying, there appeared to him a
 “ certain person cloathed in white, and de-
 “ manded of him *why he did not come out to meet*
 “ *them ?* and when *James* asked who they were,
 “ of whom he spake, he replied, those who
 “ came the other day from *Phœnicia* and *Pale-*
 “ *stine.* The next night also the same person
 “ appeared to him again ; and in order to re-
 “ move all his scruples, brought along with
 “ him St. *John Baptist,* and the *Patriarch Joseph,*
 “ who were severally presented to him, and held
 “ discourse with him on the subject of their re-
 “ liques [2].” With these stories, I shall leave
 it to the reader to determine, whether a writer of
 this turn and character can reasonably be

[1] Hist. Relig. c. ix. p. 826. B.
 p. 862. D.

[2] Ibid. c. xxi.

thought unprejudiced, and of an authority uncontestable, or worthy indeed of any credit at all, where the honor of Monks, and the reality of their miracles, are the points in quæstion.

The same Monf. *Du Pin*, after he has given us an abstract of *Theodoret's religious history*, adds the following reflection: “ this history contains many things remarkable, concerning the discipline of this time. By it we see, that great honor was given to the Saints; that they were invoked; that men expected to be helped by their prayers; that their reliques were sought after with great earnestness; that people believed very easily in them; attributed great virtue and many miracles to them; and were very credulous, &c.” [1]. But though the whole turn and purpose of *Theodoret's sacred History*, tends to strengthen the interest of the Romish, and to hurt the credit of the Protestant cause; by celebrating the forged miracles of *Monks, and Saints, and reliques, and holy water, and sacred oil*, it is curious to observe, with what a different temper the Popish writer, Monf. *Du Pin*, and the Protestant writer, Dr. *Chapman*, have each expressed themselves on the subject of his testimony. The Papist, candidly intimating his doubts, says, *if we may believe Theodoret*, such and such miracles were performed. The Protestant, on the contrary, contemning all doubts, declares, *that we must believe him, that his evidence is uncontestable, that to reject it,*

[1] See *Du Pin*, *ibid* p. 65.

is to destroy the faith of history [1]. The fortunes of these two writers were as different also as their principles: the candor of the Papist being thought too favorable to Protestantism, was censured and disgraced by the Popish Bishops; the zeal of the Protestant, tending directly to Popery, was extolled and rewarded by the Protestant Bishops.

We have dwelt already so long on the miracles of the fifth century, that it must be needless to examine the particular merit of that miracle, which Dr. *Berriman* has so accurately defended. I shall employ therefore but a very few words upon it. The story is this; “*Hunneric the Vandal*, a Christian Prince of the *Arian* heresy, in his persecution of the orthodox party in *Africa*, ordered the tongues of a certain society of them to be cut out to the roots: but by a surprizing instance of God’s good Providence, they were enabled to speak articulately and distinctly without their tongues; and so continuing to make open profession of the same doctrine, they became not onely the preachers, but living witnesses of its truth; and a perpetual rebuke to the *Arian* faction [2].” This miracle is attested by sever-

[1] If we may not admit such evidence as this, in proof of a matter of fact, I am afraid, we must shake the evidence of all human testimony, and believe nothing but what we see, feel, and know ourselves. *Miscel.*

cel. Tracts, p. 167. it p. 174. &c.

[2] See *Berrim. Historic. Account of the Trinitar. Controv.* p. 327, &c. and Dr. *Chapm. Miscel. Tracts*, p. 174.

ral contemporary writers, who affirm, that they had seen and heard some of those Confessors, *speaking distinctly, after they had lost their tongues.*

Now it may not improbably be supposed on this occasion, that though their tongues were ordered to be cut to the roots, and are said to have been so cut, yet the sentence might not be so strictly executed, as not to leave, in some of them, such a share of that organ, as was sufficient, in a tolerable degree, for the use of speech. It is remarkable also, that two of this company are said to have utterly lost the faculty of speaking; who had been deprived perhaps of their entire tongues: for though this be ascribed to the peculiar judgement of God, for a punishment of the immoralities, of which they were afterwards guilty, yet that seems to be a forced and improbable solution of the matter. We are told likewise, that another of these Confessors, *who had been dumb from his birth, yet by losing his tongue with the rest, acquired also the use of speech;* which is a circumstance so singular and extraordinary, that it carries with it a suspicion of art and contrivance, to enhance the lustre of the miracle.

But to come still more close to the point. If we should allow after all, that the tongues of these Confessors were cut away to the very roots, what will the learned Doctor say, if this boasted miracle, which he so strenuously defends, should be found at last to be no miracle at all? The tongue indeed has generally been considered, as
absolutely

absolutely necessary to the use of speech: so that to hear men talk without it, might easily pass for a miracle, in that credulous age; especially, when it gave so illustrious a confirmation to the orthodox faith, and so signal an overthrow to the *Arian Heresy*. Yet the opportunities of examining the truth of the case by experiment, have been so rare in the world, that there was always room to doubt, whether there was any thing miraculous in it or not. But we have an instance in the present century, indisputably attested, and published about thirty years ago, which clears up all our doubts, and entirely decides the question. I mean the case of a Girl, born without a tongue, who yet talked as distinctly and easily, as if she had enjoyed the full benefit of that organ: a particular account of which is given, in the *memoires of the Academy of Sciences at Paris*, drawn up by an eminent Physician, who had carefully examined the mouth of the Girl, and all the several parts of it, in order to discover, by what means her speech was performed without the help of a tongue: which he has there explained with great skill and accuracy. In the same account he refers us likewise to another instance, published about eighty years before, by a Surgeon of Saumur, of a Boy, who at the age of eight or nine years, lost his tongue by a gangrene, or ulcer, occasioned by the small pox, yet retained the faculty of speaking, in the same manner as the Girl [1].

[1] *Memoires de l'Acad. des Scienc. Ann. 1718, p. 6.*

Let our Doctor then defend this miracle with all the power of his zeal and learning: let him urge the testimonies of *Senators, Chancellors, Bishops, Archbishops, and Popes*; of persons, *who had too much learning and judgement, he says, to be deceived in so important a fact, though they lived an hundred years after it*; of *Aeneas* also of *Gaze, who opened their very mouths, as he tells us, to make his observations with more exactness* [1]. Yet the humble testimony of this single Physician, grounded on real experiment, will overturn at once all his pompous list of dignified authorities, and convince every man of judgement, that this pretended miracle, like all the other fictions, which have been imposed upon the world, under that character, owed its whole credit to our ignorance of the powers of nature.

In short; when we reflect on the corrupt and degenerate state of the Church, in the end of the fourth century, allowed by the most diligent inquirers into Antiquity; and that this age was the pattern to all that succeeded it; in which the same corruptions were not onely practised, but, agreeably to the nature of all corruption, carried still to a greater excess, and improved from bad to worse, down to the time of the Reformation, we may safely conclude, without weighing the particular scruples which may arise upon each single miracle, that they were all, in the gross, of the same class and species, the mere effects of fraud and imposture.

[1] See Berrim. *ibid.*

For we can hardly dip into any part of Ecclesiastical History, of what age soever, without being shocked by the attestation of several, which from the mere incredibility of them, appear at first sight to be fabulous. This is confessed on all sides, even by the warmest defenders of the Primitive Fathers, and cannot be accounted for in any other way, than by ascribing it to the experience, which those Fathers had, of the blind credulity and superstition of the ages in which they lived, and which had been trained by them, to consider *the impossibility of a thing, as an argument for the belief of it* [1]. But in whatever light we contemplate these stories, whether as believed, or as forged by them, or as affirmed onely, and not believed, it necessarily destroys their credit in all other miraculous relations whatsoever. Yet it is surprizing to see, with what ease the Advocates of these miracles overlook, and contemn all reflections of this kind, and think it sufficient to tell us, that *the Fathers, though honest, were apt to be very credulous*: for with these disputants, credulity, it seems, how gross soever, casts not the least slur upon their testimony; which, in all cases, where it does not confute itself by its own extrava-

[1] *Tertullian*, disputing against certain Heretics, who denied the reality of Christ's human nature, reasons thus; "The Son of God was crucified: it is no shame to own it, because it is a thing

"to be ashamed of. The Son of God died: it is wholly credible, because it is abhuman nature, reasons thus; fund. When buried, he rose again to life: it is certain, because it is impossible." De Carne Christi, § 5.

gance,

gance, they maintain to be convincing and decisive, and superior to all suspicion. Whereas the sole inference, which reason would teach us to draw from an attestation of miracles, so conspicuously fabulous, is, that the same witnesses are not to be trusted in any; as being either incapable, from a weakness of judgement of discerning the truth and probability of things, or determined by craft and fraud, to defend every thing that was useful to them. In a word, in all inquiries of this nature, we may take it for a certain rule, that those, who are conscious of the power of working true miracles, can never be tempted either to invent, or to propagate any, which are false; because the detection of any one, would taint the credit of all the rest, and defeat the end proposed by them. But Impostors are naturally drawn, by a long course of success, into a security, which puts them off their guard, and tempts them gradually, out of mere wantonness, and contempt of those, whom they had so frequently deluded, to stretch their frauds beyond the bounds of probability, till by repeated acts of this kind, they tire the patience of the most credulous, and expose their tricks to the scorn even of the populace.

I have now thrown together all, which I had collected for the support of my argument, or as much at least, as I thought sufficient to illustrate the real state of the primitive miracles: and if we cast up the sum of all that boasted evidence, which the *unanimity of the Fathers, the tradition*
of

of the Catholic Church, and the faith of history have produced at last on the other side, towards the confirmation of the said miracles, we shall find the whole, to amount in reality to no proof at all. For to run over them all again in short :

The gift of *raising the dead*, is affirmed onely by the single authority of *Irenæus*, Bishop of *Lyons* ; and was either not known, or not believed at least, in the very same age, by another Bishop, full as venerable, *Theophilus* of *Antioch*. The gift of *tongues*, which rests likewise on the single testimony of the same *Irenæus* ; is confuted even by himself, who complains of his own want of it, in the very work of propagating the Gospel. The gift of *expounding the Scriptures*, which is reckoned commonly with the rest, and claimed in particular by *Justin Martyr*, is allowed, to have had no subsistence at all, in any age, or any writer of the primitive Church. The gift of *casting out Devils*, the most celebrated of them all, is reduced to nothing, by the accounts even of the Antients themselves, which plainly testify, that it had no effect in many cases, and could not work a perfect cure in any. And as to other diseases, where oil especially was applied, they might probably enough be cured without a miracle ; or by the same arts, with which the same cures were performed among the Heathens : which, though the undoubted effects of fraud, were yet managed so dextrously, as to be constantly ascribed by the Christians to the power of Dæmons. Lastly,

The gift of Prophetic visions and trances, was of a kind, which could not easily be proved to the satisfaction of any; was of no service therefore to the propagation of the Gospel, or the conviction of unbelievers; being wholly exercised among the Christians themselves: and owing its chief credit to Heretics and Enthusiasts; and always suspected by the sober and judicious: so that, after flourishing for a while through a visionary generation or two, it presently after fell into utter contempt.

This then being the real state of the miracles of the primitive Church, I freely commit them once more to the *Chapmans*, the *Berrimans*, and the *Stebbings*; to defend and enjoy them, as much as they please; happy without doubt, in this sceptical age, to find themselves blessed with that heroic faith, which can remove mountains, and beat down every obstacle, which sense or reason, or fact can possibly oppose to it. Dr. *Chapman* has declared beforehand, *that whenever my larger work should appear, the primitive Fathers would find greater friends to their memory, and abler advocates to their cause, than I would wish to exist* [1]. That time is now come; and those abler Advocates expected: but let them appear when they will, I am so far from grudging their help to the Fathers, that I wish them the ablest, which Popery itself can afford: for Protestantism, I am sure, can supply none, whom they would chuse to retain in their cause; none, who

[1] See *Jes. Cabal farther opened*, p. 45.

can defend them, without contradicting their own profession, and disgracing their own character; or produce any thing, but what deserves to be laughed at, rather than answered. I must however except one, who acts indeed with a better grace and more consistency: for when I had treated him by mistake, as a *Protestant*, he flatly disowns the name, and calls himself a *Catholick Christian* [1]; the same title, which a Popish writer had before assumed, in his remarks on my *Letter from Rome*; and what all these Advocates, who hang, as it were, between the two religions, affect to assume, that they may evade for a while the more invidious name of Papist.

V. All that remains, towards the final confirmation of my argument, is, to refute, as I promised, some of the most plausible objections, which have been made to it by my Antagonists; and which, by humouring the prejudices and prepossessions of many pious Christians, seem the most likely, to make an impression to its disadvantage.

§ 1. In the first place then; It is objected, that by the character, which I have given of the antient Fathers, *the authority of the books of the New Testament*, which were transmitted to us through their hands, will be rendered *precarious and uncertain*.

To which I answer; that the objection is trifling and groundless, and that the authority of those books does not depend upon the faith of

[1] See Apologetic. Epist. p. 27, 28.

the Fathers, or of any particular set of men, but on the general credit and reception which they found, not onely in all the Churches, but with all the private Christians of those ages, who were able to purchase copies of them : among whom, though it might perhaps be the desire of a few to corrupt, yet it was the common interest of all, to preserve, and of none, to destroy them. And we find accordingly, that they were guarded by all with the strictest care, so as to be concealed from the knowledge and search of their heathen adversaries, who alone were desirous to extirpate them. After such a publication therefore, and wide dispersion of them from their very origin, it is hardly possible, that they should either be corrupted, or suppressed, or counterfeited by a few, of what character or abilities soever ; or that, according to the natural course of things, they should not be handed down from age to age, in the same manner, with the works of all the other antient writers of *Greece* and *Rome*, which, though transmitted through the hands of many profligate and faithless generations of men, yet have suffered no diminution of their credit on that account : for though in every age there were several perhaps, who, from crafty and selfish motives, might be disposed to deprave, or even to suppress some particular books, yet their malice could reach onely to a few copies, and would be restrained therefore from the attempt, or corrected at least after the attempt by the greater number of the same

I

books,

books, which were out of their reach, and remained still incorrupt. But besides all this, there were some circumstances peculiar to the books of the New Testament which insured the preservation of them more effectually, than of any other antient books whatsoever; the divinity of their character; and the religious regard, which was paid to them by all the sects and parties of Christians; and above all, the mutual jealousies of those very parties, which were perpetually watching over each other, lest any of them should corrupt the sources of that pure doctrine, which they all professed to teach and to deduce from the same books. Let the craft therefore of the antient Fathers be as great, as we can suppose it to be: let it be capable of adding some of their own forgeries for a while to the Canon of Scripture; yet it was not in the power of any craft, to impose spurious pieces, in the room of those genuin ones, which were actually deposited in all Churches, and preserved with the utmost reverence, in the hands of so many private Christians.

But I may go a step farther, and venture to declare; that if we should allow the objection to be true, it cannot in any manner hurt my argument: for if it be natural and necessary, that the craft and credulity of witnesses should always detract from the credit of their testimony; who can help it? or on what is the consequence to be charged, but on that nature and constitution of things, from which it flows? or if the authority

of any books be really weakened, by the character which I have given of the Fathers, will it follow from thence, that the character must necessarily be false, and that the Fathers were neither crafty nor credulous? that surely can never be pretended; because the craft and credulity which are charged upon them must be determined by another sort of evidence; not by consequences, but by facts; and if the charge be confirmed by these, it must be admitted as true, how far soever the consequences may reach.

§ 2. It has been alledged, “ that all suspicion
 “ of fraud in the case of the primitive miracles
 “ seems to be precluded, by that public appeal
 “ and challenge which the Christian Apologists
 “ make to their enemies the Heathens, to come
 “ and see with their own eyes the reality of the
 “ facts which they attest.” But this objection, though it may seem plausible indeed to a common reader, yet to all, who are acquainted with the condition of the Christians in those days, and the difficulty of making their Apologies known to the world, will be found to have no real weight in it. The Gospel indeed soon began to make a considerable progress among the vulgar, and to gain some few also of a more distinguished rank, yet continued to be held in such contempt by the generality of the better sort, through the three first centuries, that they scarce ever thought it worth while to make any enquiry about it, or to examine the merit of its pretensions. The principal writers of *Rome*,
 who

who make any mention of the Christians, about the Time of *Trajan*, plainly shew that they knew nothing more of them, or their religion than what they had picked up, as it were, by chance, from the gross misrepresentation of common fame, and speak of them accordingly, as *a set of despicable, stubborn, and even wicked Enthusiasts*.

Suetonius calls them, *a race of men of a new and mischievous superstition* [1]. And *Tacitus*, describing the horrible tortures, which they suffered under *Nero*, for the pretended crime of burning the City of *Rome*, says; “That they were de-
“ tested for their flagitious practices; possessed
“ with an abominable superstition; and con-
“ demned, not so much for their supposed crime
“ of setting fire to the City, as for the hatred of
“ all mankind: and though they deserved the
“ most exemplary punishments, yet it raised
“ some pity towards them, to see them so miser-
“ ably destroyed, not on the account of the
“ public utility, but to satiate the cruelty of a
“ single man [2].”

Pliny also, when he was the Governor of a Province, in which the Christians were very numerous, and under an actual persecution in the reign of *Trajan*, yet in his celebrated letter to that Emperor concerning them, declares;

[1] Afflicti suppliciiis Christi- pellabat — exitiabilis Super-
stiani: genus hominum su- stitio rursus erumpebat—
perstitutionis novæ & maleficæ. haud perinde in crimine in-
In Ner. c. 16. cendii, quam odio humani

[2] Quos per flagitia in- generis, convicti—&c. Ann.
vivos, vulgus Christianos ap- l. xv. 44.

“ that he had never been present at any of their
 “ examinations, and did not so much as know,
 “ for what they were punished, or how far they
 “ deserved punishment: that by all the inqui-
 “ ries which he had since made, he could not
 “ discover any practices among them, but what
 “ were harmless and innocent.—And nothing
 “ in short, but a wretched and extravagant su-
 “ perstition, which had spread itself very wide,
 “ among persons of both sexes, of every age
 “ and condition; which might however be sub-
 “ dued by gentler methods; by moderating the
 “ rigor of the persecution, and pardoning the
 “ penitent; by which lenity great numbers of
 “ them had already been recalled to their an-
 “ cient worship [1].”

This is the whole account which we have of the Primitive Christians, from the best Heathen writers, to the time of *Antoninus Pius*: in whose reign, and that of his Successor, *M. Aurelius*, the ancient Apologies of *Justin Martyr*, *Melito*, and *Athenagoras*, were addressed to the Empe-

[1] *Cognitionibus de Christianis inter fui nunquam, ideo nescio, quid aut quatenus aut puniri soleat, aut quæri, &c. Ep. l. x. 97.*

N. B. Pliny says in this letter, that many of both sexes, and of all ages, ranks, or orders of men, had embraced Christianity. *Tertulian* also gives the same ac-

count about an hundred years later. [*Apologet. i. ad Scapul. vers. fin.*] But it must be observed, that their accounts were given from the Provinces of *Bithynia* and *Africa*, where the dignity even of the most eminent was but very little considered or respected in the great republic of *Rome*.

ror and Senate of *Rome*: notwithstanding which, their condition, generally speaking, continued much the same through the following ages, till they were established at last by the civil power: during all which time, they were constantly insulted and calumniated by their Heathen Adversaries, as a *stupid, credulous, impious sect; the scum of mankind, and the prey of crafty Impostors*: calumnies, of which all the ancient Apologists complain, and take great pains to confute. *Tertullian* expostulates very warmly with the Heathen Magistrates, “ that they would not give
 “ themselves the trouble, to make the least in-
 “ quiry into their manners and doctrines; but
 “ condemned them for the mere name, without
 “ examination or trial; treating a Christian of
 “ course, as guilty of every crime; *as an enemy*
 “ *of the Gods, Emperors, laws, customs, and even*
 “ *of nature itself*—and what, says he, can be
 “ more unjust than to hate, what you know no-
 “ thing of, even though it deserved to be hat-
 “ ed [1]?” *Arnobius* and *Lactantius* make the same complaint near an hundred years later, in the beginning of the fourth century, that they were derided every where by the Gentiles, *as a senseless, stupid race of blockheads and brutes, to whose impieties, all the calamities, which afflicted*

[1] Christianum hominem, omnium Scelerum reum, Deorum, Imperatorum, legum, morum, naturæ totius inimi-

cum existimas, &c. Apol. § 1, 2.—'Ἐφ' ἡμῶν δὲ τὸ ὄνομα ὡς ἔλεγχον λαμβάτετε, &c. Vid. Just. Mart. apol. i. p. 8.

the several countries where they lived, were constantly imputed [1].

In these circumstances, it cannot be imagined, that men of figure and fortunes would pay any attention to the Apologies or writings of a sect, so utterly despised; especially, when on the one hand there was no elegance of style or composition, to invite them to read; and on the other, all the discouragements which the Government could give, to deter them from reading. Much less can we believe, that the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, should take any notice of those Apologies, or even know indeed, that any such were addressed to them. For should the like case happen in our own days, that any Methodist, Moravian, or French Prophet, should publish an apology for his brethren, addressed to the King and the Parliament, is it not wholly improbable, that the Government would pay any regard to it, or take it at all into their consideration? How can it then be supposed, that the Emperor and Senate of

[1] Nos hebetes, solidi, obtusi pronuntiamur & bruti, sed pestilentias, inquit, & siccitates, bella, frugum inopiam—resque alias noxias—Dii nobis important injuriis vestris, atque offensionibus exasperati—Arnob. l. i. p. 2, 7.

Cur igitur pro stulis, vanis ineptis habemur? Lact. l. iv.

c. 13. Illud quoque ortum est vulgare proverbium; *pluvia deficit*, fit causa Christiani. Aug. Civ. D. l. ii. iii.

Si Tiberis ascendit ad mœnia; si Nilus non ascendit in arva; si cœlum stetit; terra movit; si fames; si lues; statim, Christianos ad Leonem. Tertull. Apol. 40.

Rome,

Rome, who had a worse opinion of the ancient Christians than we of our modern Fanatics, and instead of tolerating, were using all methods to destroy them, would give themselves the trouble to read, or to consider the merit of their writings?

We must add to all this, the great difficulty of publishing books, or of making them known to the world in those ages. The case, which we now find, in providing and dispersing, what number of copies we please, by the opportunity of the press, makes us apt to imagine, without considering the matter, that the publication of books was the same easy affair in all former times as in the present. But the case was quite different. For when there were no books in the world, but what were written out by hand, with great labor and expence, the method of publishing them was necessarily very slow, and the price very dear; so that the rich onely and curious would be disposed, or able to purchase them; and to such also, it was often difficult to procure them, or to know even where they were to be bought.

In the Epistle of the Church of *Smyrna*, mentioned above, concerning the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, there is a passage or two, which will help to confirm what I am now asserting. For towards the end of it, the *Philadelphians*, to whom it is addressed, are desired, as soon as they have informed themselves of the contents, *to send it forward to all the other brethren*, who lived
more

more remote, or beyond *Philadelphia*, that they also might read it and glorify God. The note likewise, which is annexed to the end of the Epistle, declares, “ that the copy of this most valued piece, which had been transcribed from the book of *Irenæus*, had lain buried and unknown at *Corinth* for several ages, almost destroyed by time, and in danger of being lost to the world, till it was discovered by a revelation from *Polycarp* himself, made to one *Pionius*,” from whose transcript, all the copies of it now extant are derived [1]. These passages, I say, plainly intimate, how difficult it must have been to the Christians of those days, to provide such books as were wanted even for their own use, and much more to disperse such a number of them, as was sufficient for the information of the public.

Since this then was the condition of publishing books in those primitive ages, in which the Christians were neither able to bear the expence of copying, nor the Heathens disposed to buy them, there is great reason to believe, that their Apologies, how gravely soever addressed to Emperors and Senates, lay concealed and unknown to the public for many years, in a few private hands, and among the faithful onely; especially, when the publication of them was not onely difficult and expensive, but so crimi-

[1] Μαθούτες ἔν ταῦτα, καὶ διδάξασιν τὸν κύριον. § xx. it. τοῖς ἐπίκεινα ἀδελφοῖς τὴν ἐπι- xxiii. xxiv. ρολὴν διαπέμψασε, ἵνα καὶ ἑτέροις

nal also, as to expose them often to danger, and even to capital punishment; and when the books themselves, as oft as they were found by the magistrate, instead of being read, were generally ordered to be burnt [1].

§ 3. It is urged against me, “ that no suspi-
 “ cion of craft can reasonably be entertained
 “ against persons of so exalted a piety, who ex-
 “ posed themselves to persecution, and even to
 “ Martyrdom, in confirmation of the truth of
 “ what they taught.” But this likewise will
 appear to have as little solidity in it as the for-
 mer. For all, who are conversant with history,
 know, that nothing gives so invincible a preju-
 dice, and so strong a bias to the mind of man,
 as religious zeal in favor of every thing, that is
 thought useful to the object which excites it.
 And the several facts, which I have already
 stated, will inable us to judge, in what manner
 the extraordinary zeal of those ancients may be
 presumed to have operated in the case now in
 quæstion. I shall say nothing more therefore
 on that head: but since some of those Fathers,
 to whose testimony I have chiefly appealed, as
Papias, Justin, Irenæus, Cyprian, &c. were not

[1] Καίποτε θανάτε ἱριδιέν-
 τῶ κατὰ τῶν διδασκάλων, ἢ ὅπως
 ἠμολογείων τὸ ὄνομα τῷ Χριστῷ,
 ἡμεῖς πωλιχῶ καὶ ἀσπαζόμεθα,
 καὶ διδάσκωμεν· εἰ δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς ὡς
 ἰχθυοὶ ἐπιπέτετε ταῖςδε ταῖς λό-
 γοις, εὐπρόσῳ διδάσκει—τῷ ρο-

μένον. Just. M. Apol. i. p. 69.
 Nam nostra quidem scrip-
 ta cur ignibus meruerunt
 dari? cur immaniter con-
 venticula dirui? Arnold. l.
 iv. vers. fin.

only persons of the greatest piety and zeal, but said to have been Martyrs also for the faith of Christ; it may be proper to add a reflection or two on the particular case of Martyrdom; in order to shew, that this venerable name made no real difference in the personal characters of men, nor ought to give any additional weight to the authority of a Christian witness.

There were various motives of different kinds, as Mr. *Dodwell* has shewn, which would naturally induce the primitive Christians, not only to indure, but even to wish and aspire to Martyrdom. He observes, “that among the ancient *Jews*, the *Galileans* were remarkable for the obstinacy of their temper, and a contempt of death: whose example, he imagines, might have some influence on those first Christians, who drew their origin from that country, and were constantly called *Galileans*, and charged with the same spirit of obstinacy by their adversaries [1].” A character, which seems to be particularly verified in the Christians of *Palestine*, concerning whom, *Tiberianus*, the Governor of *Syria*, sends the following account to the Emperor *Trajan*.

“I am quite tired with punishing and destroying the *Galileans*, or those of the sect called Christians, according to your orders. Yet they never cease to profess voluntarily,

[1] *Poterat & Judæorum, rum Christianorum patientia præsertim Galilæorum castitata illa indoles in primo-* locum habere. *Dodw. Diff. Cyprian. xii. 2.*

“ what

“ what they are, and to offer themselves to
“ death. Wherefore I have labored by exhorta-
“ tions and threats, to discourage them from
“ daring to confess to me, that they are of that
“ Sect. Yet in spite of all persecution, they
“ continue still to do it. Be pleased therefore
“ to let me know, what your Highness thinks
“ proper to be done with them [1].”

Glory also, or reputation, was another great spur to Martyrdom: for by the principles of those ages, nothing was esteemed more glorious than the *crown of Martyrdom*, as it was called. There was an anniversary festival instituted to the honor of each Martyr; in which their memories were celebrated by panegyric orations, and a veneration, next to divine, paid to their reliques. In their prisons they were visited by the Christians of all ranks; proud to minister to them in the very lowest offices, and to kiss their chains: and if they happened to escape with life from their tortures, as they frequently did, their authority was ever after most highly respected; in the decision of all controversies; in absolving men from the ordinary discipline of the Church; in granting pardon to the lapsed Christians; and restoring them to communion, on what terms they thought fit [2].

[1] Vid. Tiberian. Epist. apud Coteler. Fdit. Patr. Apostol. vol. ii. p. 181.

[2] Quis in carcerem ad osculanda vincula Martyris

reptare patietur? [Tertull. ad Uxor. ii. 4] Quam pacem quidam in Ecclesia non habentes, a Martyribus in carcere exorare solebant [Id.

But the principal incentive to Martyrdom, was the assurance, not onely of an immortality of glory, and happiness in another world, in common with all other pious Christians, but of extraordinary and distinguished rewards, and a degree of happiness, proportionable to the degree of their sufferings. For while the souls of ordinary Christians were to wait their doom in some intermediate state; or pass to their final bliss through a purgation by fire, it was a general belief, that the Martyrs were admitted to

ad Martyr. ii.] Vid. Dodw. Differt. Cyprian. xi. 9, 10.]

Sacrificia pro eis semper, ut meministis, offerimus, quoties Martyrum passiones, & dies anniversaria commemoratione celebramus. [Cypr. Ep. 34. it. 37.]

Mandant aliquid Martyres fieri? si iusta, si licita, si non contra ipsum Dominum, a Dei Sacerdote facienda sunt. [Cypr. de lapsis. p. 174.] Ut qui libellum a Martyribus acceperunt, & auxilio eorum adjuvari apud Dominum in delictis suis possunt, — cum pace a Martyribus promissa ad Dominum remittantur. [Id. Ep. 13, & 12.]

N. B. Eusebius, speaking of the persecution under M. Aurelius and L. Verus, says, “that those, who were then
“racked and tortured for

“the confession of their
“faith, were so humble, that
“they would not assume the
“title of Martyrs, nor suffer
“it to be given to them, de-
“claring none to be worthy
“of that name, but those
“who were made perfect by
“suffering death; and pray-
“ing, that they also might
“arrive at that perfection.”

[Hist. Eccles. v. 2.] But we find a contrary practice in *Cyprian's* time, who freely gives the *title of Martyr* to all, who had indured torments for the faith of Christ. Which was so far from being rejected by them, that many, as he complains, were so puffed up with pride on that account, as to give great disturbance to the peace and discipline of the Church. Vid. Epist. x, xi, xii, xiii, &c.

the immediate fruition of Paradise, and that the fire of Martyrdom purged all their sins away at once [1]. And the opinion likewise, which commonly prevailed in those days, that this world was near to its end, made them the more eager still to snatch that crown, which would entitle them to such high privileges, ; give them a power with God, so as to procure benefits for others, and make them Assessors and Judges with Christ himself at the last day [2].

[1] Sed & justos cum judicaverit, etiam igni eos examinabit, &c. Lact. vii. 21.

Nemo peregrinatus a corpore, statim immoratur penes Dominum, nisi ex Martyrii prerogativa ; paradiso scilicet, non inferis diversurus. Tertull. de Resur. carn. 43.

Quis non — pati exoptat ? ut Dei totam gratiam redimat ; ut omnem veniam ab eo compensatione sanguinis sui expediat ? omnia enim lucis operi delicta donantur. Id. Apologet. ad fin.

N. B. Cyprian, speaking of the different states of the lapsed Christians, though restored afterwards to the Church by penance, and of the Martyrs, who had nobly suffered death or torments for the faith of Christ, says, “ it is one thing, to lie at mercy, another, to arrive at

“ glory ; one thing, to be
“ thrown into prison, and
“ not to be discharged, till
“ you have paid the utter-
“ most farthing ; another, to
“ receive the immediate re-
“ ward of your faith and vir-
“ tue : one thing, to be
“ cleansed from your Sins by
“ a long course of torments,
“ and a purgation by fire ;
“ another, to have all your
“ sins wiped off at once by
“ martyrdom : in a word,
“ one thing to hang in sus-
“ pense about your doom, in
“ the day of judgement ; an-
“ other, to be crowned direct-
“ ly by the Lord.” Ep. li. p.
71. ad fin.

[2] Αὐτοὶ τὸν αἰὸς Θεοῦ Μάρ-
τυρες παρ’ ἡμῶν, οἱ ὧν τὸ Χρῆσθ
παράδεισος, ἢ τῆς βασιλείας αὐ-
τῶ κοινωτοῖ, ἢ μετὰ τὴν τῆς κη-
σείας αὐτῶ. Euseb. Hist. l. vi.
c. 42.

There

There was another notion, diligently inculcated and generally believed at the same time, which was sufficient of itself to efface all the terrors of Martyrdom, *viz.* that under all that dreadful apparatus of racks and fires, and the seeming atrocity of their tortures, the Martyrs were miraculously freed from all sense of pain, nay, felt nothing but transports of joy, from the cruelty of their tormentors. All which is expressly affirmed by many of the ecclesiastical writers. *The visible assistance of heaven*, says Dr. Chapman, *relieving the pains of some, extinguishing them in others, and converting them into pleasure and rapture in many—*which facts, he declares, *to be so well known, and so well attested; so plain and so indisputable, that there was no occasion for him to take the trouble of proving them* [1]. Socrates, the Historian, has furnished an instance of them in the case of one *Theodorus*: and the old Martyrologies, as they are published by the Romanists, and especially *the Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas*, to which the Doctor refers us, for the indisputable proof of true miracles, will supply us with many more [2]. This *Theodorus*

[1] Miscell. Tracts, p. 156

[2] As appears beyond all dispute from the acts of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*, &c. Ibid. p. 169.

N. B. It is strange, that a Protestant Divine should lay so much stress on these Acts, as to make them the un-

questionable vouchers of true miracles: which, while they excite our compassion for the sufferings, and our admiration of the courage of these two female Martyrs, yet shock and disgust us at the same time, to see all this virtue and fortitude derived, not

was a young Christian, of eminent zeal and piety, who is said to have suffered the most cruel

from the calm and sober principles of the Gospel, but from the impetuosity of a wild and extravagant enthusiasm. Among many other instances of this, written by *Perpetua* herself, in her prison, she relates what follows: "That, as she was praying with the rest of her fellow martyrs, she happened to mention, all of a sudden, and to her own surprize, the name of *Dinocrates*, which had not come into her mind of a long time, till that very moment. It was the name of her brother, who died of a cancer in his face, when he was but seven years old. This renewed her grief for his unhappy case; and convinced her, that she ought to pray for him, as being now held worthy to intercede for others: whereupon she began to put up her prayers and sighs for him to the Lord, and in that same night received this vision: she saw *Dinocrates* coming out of a dark place, in which there were many others with him, greatly tormented by heat and thirst; with a sordid and

"pale countenance, and the same wound in his face which he had when he died. There was a pool of water also in the place, but with a brink deeper than the statue of the boy, who stretched himself out, as desirous to drink, but was not able to reach the water. This grieved *Perpetua*, who, as soon as she was awake, knew by this vision that her brother was in an uneasy state: but being assured, that she could relieve him by her prayers, she continued to intercede day and night, with groans and tears, that his punishment might be remitted for her sake. Upon which, she shortly after received another vision, when the place, which before was dark, appeared bright and shining; and *Dinocrates* was now quite clean, well dressed and refreshed; and instead of the wound, with a scar onely in his face: and the brink of the pool was reduced to the height onely of his navel, whence he instantly drew water: on the brink also stood a vial full of water, out of which

tortures by the command of the Emperor *Julian*; but after he was left for dead by his tor-

“ he began to drink, yet the
 “ water in it never failed: so
 “ that the boy, having now
 “ satisfied his thirst, went a-
 “ way chearfully to play, as
 “ children usually do; by
 “ which *Perpetua* understood,
 “ that her brother was re-
 “ moved from the place of
 “ his punishment.”

The case of this infant *Dinocrates*, was alledged by an ancient writer, in a controversy with *St. Austin*, as a proof, that baptism was not absolutely necessary to an admission into Paradise: to which *St. Austin* answers, “ That though the boy was
 “ but seven years old, he
 “ might probably be bap-
 “ tized at that age, and after
 “ baptism be guilty of lying
 “ or denying Christ: or in
 “ the time of persecution,
 “ might be drawn perhaps
 “ by his impious father, who
 “ was an Heathen, into some
 “ act of Idolatry, for which
 “ he was doomed to a place
 “ of torments, till his pardon
 “ was obtained by the prayers
 “ of his sister, then going to
 “ die for Christ.” [De Origin. anim. l. i. c. 10. & l. iii. c. 9.] From these and several other visions of the same

kind, which are related in the same Acts, the Romanists draw what they take to be a demonstrative and experimental proof of every thing, which they teach with regard to the other world; of an *Hell*, a *Purgatory*, a *Limbus*, or *separate place of Infants*, and another *Limbus of the Ancient Fathers*, with a *Paradise for the immediate reception of Martyrs*: and that the dead may be relieved also from their pains by the prayers of the living. [Vid. *Ruinart. Acta Martyr. de SS. Perpet. & Felic. § VII & VIII, & notas Holstenii & Possini.*]

Such are the miracles, which *Dr. Chapman* affirms to be indisputably proved by the Acts of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*; and such the doctrines, which are deduced from them: but tho' neither the enthusiasm nor the Popery, with which they abound, could check his Protestant zeal from ascribing a divine authority to them, there is another circumstance still belonging to them, sufficient, one would think, to have destroyed their whole credit with an Advocate of primitive and orthodox Antiquity: for the origi-
 mentors,

mentors, was providentially preserved and restored to life. “ *Ruffinus* happening to meet

nal Collector and publisher of them appears to have been one of those Heretics and disciples of *Montanus*, who gave so much disturbance to the Church in the early ages. This is declared to be most certain by the learned *Valesius*, though a Papist; and notwithstanding the pains, which Mr. *Ruinart*, the Editor of the Martyrologies, takes, to confute that imputation, the truth of it seems to be unquestionable. *Valesius*, indeed, like a good Catholic, desires, *That this circumstance may not detract, either from the authority of those Acts, or the veneration due to those holy Martyrs, and charges it as a piece of craft on the Montanists, that they made use of these visions, to support the credit of their own dreams.* But when we reflect on the enthusiastic spirit of *Perpetua*, and with what a confidence she relates her wonderful visions and intercourse with the Lord; and when we find her character and revelations mentioned with praise by *Tertulian*, then a *Montanist*, it is highly probable, that *Perpetua* also herself was tainted with the same Heresy;

and that *St. Austin* consequently, as an eminent Critic has observed, was drawn by some false tradition concerning these Martyrs, to honour them as true Saints, when, in reality, they were Heretics. [Vid. Ittig. Dissert. de Hæresiar. Sect. 2. c. xiii. § 28.]

From the same Acts we see likewise, as I have said, how these primitive Martyrs went out to meet their cruel deaths with a firm persuasion, that they should feel no pain from them. *Felicitas* was eight months gone with child, when their execution drew near; and being afraid, as her companions also were, that on the account of her pregnancy, she should be left by them alone in the way to their common hope, they all put up their joint prayers to heaven, three days before they suffered: upon which she fell presently into labor, and was delivered of a female child: but in the time of delivery, when she expressed a sharp sense of the pains which she felt; one of the servants of the prison said to her, *If you lament so much now, what will you do, when you are*
 Y 2 “ with

“ with him many years after, took occasion to
 “ ask him, whether he had been sensible of any
 “ very sharp pains under the agony of his tor-
 “ ture; to which he answered, that he had felt
 “ but very little, and that a certain young person
 “ stood by him all the time, wiping away the
 “ sweat which flowed from him, strengthening
 “ his mind, and filling him with delight rather
 “ than torment, during his continuance on the
 “ rack [1].”

Lastly, we must add to these several motives, the scandal of flying from persecution, and the infamy which attended the lapsed Christians; to as to make life hardly supportable to those, who, through fear of the rack and a cruel death, had been tempted to deny their faith, or guilty of any compliance with the idolatry of their persecutors. All which topics, when displayed with art and eloquence by their ablest Teachers, were sufficient to inflame the multitude, to what pitch of zeal they pleased, so as to make them even provoke, and offer themselves forwardly to the most dreadful torments. “ Who is there,
 “ says *Cyprian*, who would not strive with all
 “ his might, to arrive at so great a glory, to be
 “ a friend of God; enter into present joy with
 “ Christ; and after earthly torments receive

*thrown to the beasts, which you
 despised, when you refused to
 sacrifice? to which she an-
 swered, I now feel what I suf-
 fer; but then, another will be*

*in me, who will feel for me,
 because I am to suffer for him.
 Vid. Act. ibid. § xv.*

[1] *Socrat. Hist. l. iii. c.
 19. it Sozom. l. v. c. 20.*

“ heavenly

“ heavenly rewards ? If it be glorious to world-
“ ly foldiers, after conquering an enemy, to re-
“ turn triumphant into their country, how much
“ greater glory is it, after having vanquished
“ the Devil, to return triumphant into paradise,
“ whence *Adam* was expelled, and there to erect
“ trophies over that very enemy, who expelled
“ him ? To accompany God, when he comes
“ to take vengeance on his enemies ; to be
“ placed at his fide, when he fits in judgement ;
“ to be made coheirs with Chrift ; equal with
“ Angels ; and together with *the Apostles, Pro-*
“ *phets, and Patriarchs*, to rejoice in the posses-
“ sion of an heavenly kingdom ? These things
“ you are to bear in your minds and memories.
“ What perfecution can get the better of such
“ meditations ? what torments be superior to
“ them [1] ?”

These principles and motives, I say, had such force, as sometimes to animate even bad men, to indure a Martyrdom. For the Heretics also had their Martyrs, as all history informs us, as well as the Orthodox ; who yet in their common sufferings and death, continued to testify their mutual averfion, *and to refuse all com-*

[1] Exhortat. ad Martyr. *away with it every thing it*
c. xii. This may serve as a *meets ; since he was capabl*
specimen of that *true, and nobl*
of raising what passions he
pleas'd, and of persuading us, to
do whatever he had a mind to.
prian, which, as Dr. Mar-
shall, the Translator of his Pref. to his Translation, p
works, says, *resembles an im-*
petuous torrent, which carries
17.

union with each other [1]. But by bad men, who became Martyrs, I do not mean such only as were called Heretics, for that name was often given, even to the best; but the proud, the contentious, the drunken, and the lewd, among the orthodox Martyrs themselves: of all which kinds, there were many, as St. *Cyprian* complains, who, after they had nobly sustained the trial of Martyrdom, and escaped with life from the torments of their persecutors, yet by a petulant, factious, and profligate behaviour, gave great scandal and disturbance to the discipline of the Church.

This is expressly declared by *Cyprian* in several of his letters: in one of which, addressed to the whole body of the Confessors, after he has signified his joy, “ That the greatest part of them
 “ were made the better by the honor of their
 “ confession, and preserved their glory, by a
 “ quiet and inoffensive carriage, yet he had
 “ been informed, he says, of others, who in-
 “ fected their society, and disgraced the lauda-
 “ ble name of Confessor by their evil conversa-
 “ tion: some of them being drunken and lascivious, some puffed up and swollen with pride;
 “ while others, as he had heard with the utmost
 “ grief, defiled their bodies, the temples of God,
 “ sanctified by their confession, with the pro-
 “ miscuous and infamous use of lewd wo-

[1] Καὶ ἐπειδὴν οἱ ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς τύχῃ μετὰ τῶν τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς
 κατὰ ἀλήθειαν πίστεως μαρτύριον τῶν θρυγῶν αἰρέσεως λεγομένων
 ἀλλήλους ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας μαρτυρίας, διαφέρουσι τε πρὸς
 “ men.”

“men [1].” In one of his letters also to the Clergy, he says, “I am grieved, when I hear how some of them run about, wickedly and insolently, spending their time in trifles, or in sowing discord; and defiling the members of Christ, and which have already confessed Christ, by the unlawful use of women [2].” And in another treatise, where he is touching the same subject, “Let no man wonder, says he, that some of the Confessors commit such horrible and grievous sins; for confession does not secure them from the snares and temptations of the Devil—otherwise we should never after see any frauds, and whoredoms, and adulteries, in Confessors, which I now groan and grieve to see in some of them [3].”

αὐτοῖς, καὶ μὴ κοινωθήσασιν αὐτοῖς τελευτῆσαι. Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. 16. it. c. 18.

[1] Sed quosdam audio inficere numerum vestrum, & laudem præcipui nominis præva sua conversatione destruere, &c. &c. Epist. vi.

[2] Doleo enim, quando audio quosdam improbe & insolenter discurrere, & ad ineptias vel discordias vacare: Christi membra & jam Christum confessa, per concubitus illicitos inquinare. Ep. v. it. vii. 22, 24.

[3] De Unitat. Eccles. vers. fin. p. 185.

N. B. The name of Martyr was given, as I have said

above, to all those, who had suffered tortures for the public profession of their faith before the Magistrates. And the title of Confessor to those, who, after making the same profession, had been committed onely to prison, in order to be reserved to the same tortures, or punished with death. Whence *Tertullian* calls them, *Martyres designati*, or Martyrs elect, [ad Martyr. i. vid. Cypr. Ep. viii. & Not. Rigalt. 8.]

But with regard to this case of Martyrdom, I cannot forbear observing a strange contrariety both of principle and practice in these primitive

It is not my design, by what is said here on the subject of Martyrdom, to detract in any

ages, between the times of *Polycarp* and *Tertullian*. The Martyrdom of *Polycarp*, in the narrative of it, written by the Church of *Smyrna*, is twice called an *Evangeli- cal Martyrdom*, or performed according to the rules of the Gospel, and in imitation of Christ; [§ i. 19.] who did not offer himself forwardly to his enemies, but withdrew himself from them, and waited till he was betrayed into their hands: and commanded his Apostles also, *when they were persecuted in one City, so flee into another*. [Matt. x. 29.] When the persecution therefore grew hot in *Smyrna*, *Polycarp* withdrew himself from that city into the neighbouring villages; shifting his quarters still from village to village, to avoid his pursuers, till he was betrayed by one of his own domestics; [§ 9.] and so fulfilled both the example and precept of our Lord. And upon the same authority also, *Clemens of Alexandria* declares it to be a sin, and a kind of self-murder, not to flee on such an occasion from the malice of their persecutors. [Strom. l. iv. c. 10.]

Tertullian, on the contrary, about half a century after, wrote a book against *all flight in persecution*, in which he labors to prove, “that our Saviour’s precept was temporary, and peculiar to the circumstances of those times, and addressed wholly to the Apostles; who yet afterwards, when those circumstances were changed, both practised and prescribed a different conduct. That it was base in private Christians to fly, and much more in Bishops and Pastors.—That a good Shepherd will lay down his life for his flock, but a bad one fly at the sight of the wolf, and leave his sheep to be torn in pieces.” [p. 97, 696.] He inveighs also against another practice, which seems to have been common among the Christians of those days, of *ransoming themselves from their persecutors by a sum of money*; and declares it to be “an affront to God to redeem those by money, whom Christ had redeemed with his blood: and to make secret bargains with an informer or soldier, or knavish President, for the manner

manner from the real merit and just praise of those primitive Martyrs, who, with an invincible constancy, sustained the cause of Christ, at

“ life of a Christian (whom
 “ Christ had purchased and
 “ set free in the face of the
 “ world) as if it were for a
 “ thief. [p. 697, 698.] He
 “ exhorts them therefore to
 “ commit themselves intirely
 “ to God ; who could either
 “ throw them into the midst
 “ of their enemies, while
 “ they were flying, or cover
 “ them from danger even in
 “ the midst of the people:
 “ and he shews by an emi-
 “ nent example, that neither
 “ flight nor money was ef-
 “ fectual to procure their
 “ safety. *Rutilius*, says he, a
 “ most holy Martyr, after he
 “ had oft escaped by flying
 “ from place to place, and
 “ redeemed himself, as he
 “ imagined, from all danger
 “ by his money, yet in all
 “ this security, was unex-
 “ pectedly apprehended, car-
 “ ried before the President,
 “ and put to a severe torture,
 “ for the correction, I believe,
 “ of his flight: and being
 “ committed at last to the
 “ flames, he then ascribed
 “ the Martyrdom, which he
 “ had been avoiding, to the
 “ mercy of God: and what

“ else did the Lord intend to
 “ teach us by this example,
 “ but that we ought not to fly
 “ from persecution ?” [p. 93.]

These were the principles, which generally prevailed in the Church from the time of *Tertullian*: so that when two of the most eminent Bishops, who succeeded him, *St. Cyprian of Carthage*, and *St. Dionysius of Alexandria*, found it expedient in a time of persecution, to preserve their lives by retiring from their several Sees, they had no other excuse to recur to, but the plea of a divine revelation, and the express command of God for it: the precept and example of our Saviour; the practice of his Apostles; and *the Evangelical Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*, being no longer of any force, against the Enthusiastic zeal, and visionary temper of that age. Which zeal however, because it happened to be ridiculed by an infidel writer, is strenuously defended by *Dr. Chapman*, in the very words and reasoning of *Tertullian*. See *Miscel. Tracts*, p. 157.

the expence of their lives. It is reasonable to believe, that, generally speaking, they were the best sort of Christians, distinguished by their exemplary zeal and piety; and the chief ornaments of the Church in their several ages: yet it is certain, that they were subject still to the same passions, prejudices, and errors, which were common to all the other pious Christians of the same age. My sole view therefore is, to expose the vanity of those extravagant honors, and that idolatrous worship, which are paid to them indiscriminately by the Church of *Rome*; and to shew especially, that the circumstance of their Martyrdom, while it gives the strongest proof of the sincerity of their faith and trust in the promises of the Gospel, adds nothing to the character of their knowledge or their sagacity; nor consequently, any weight to their testimony, in preference to that of any other just and devout Christian whatsoever [1].

[1] *Savonarola*, a most pious and learned Monk of the fifteenth century, preached with great force and eloquence in *Italy*, against the corruptions of the court of *Rome*, and the flagitious life and practices of Pope *Alexander* the sixth, who not being able to silence him, condemned him to be hanged: of whom Dr. *Jer. Taylor* tells the following story:

“Two *Franciscan Friars*,
“ says he, offered themselves

“ to the fire, to prove *Savonarola* to be an Heretic. But
“ a certain *Jacobin* offered
“ himself to the fire, to prove,
“ that *Savonarola* had true
“ revelations, and was no
“ Heretic. In the mean
“ time *Savonarola* preached,
“ but made no such confident offer, nor durst he venture at that new kind of
“ *fire ordeal*; and put the case,
“ that all four had passed
“ through the fire, and died
“ in the flames, what would

§ 4. It has been frequently objected by my Antagonists, that to reject the unanimous testimony of the Fathers, in their reports of the primitive miracles, will destroy the faith and credit of all history.

This was the constant cant of all the zealots, even of the Heathen world, whenever any of their established superstitions were attacked by men of sense. “ If these things, they cried, “ approved by the wisdom of our ancestors, “ and confirmed by the consent of ages, can be “ shewn at last to be false, we must burn all our

“ that have proved? Had he
“ been a Heretic, or no He-
“ retic, the more or the less,
“ for the confidence of these
“ zealous Idiots? If we mark
“ it, a great many argu-
“ ments, on which many
“ Sects rely, are no better
“ probation than this.” Lib.
of Proph. Ep. Dedic. p. 39.

There is another story like-
wise, somewhat applicable to
the present purpose, which I
have elsewhere made use of,
as it is told by Sir *Tho. Roe* ;
“ that the house and Church
“ of the Jesuits in *India* hap-
“ pening to be burnt, the
“ Crucifix was found un-
“ touched, which was given
“ out as a miracle. Upon
“ this, the King sent for the
“ Jesuit, and having examin-
“ ed him about the fact, made

“ this proposal to him, *That*
“ *if he would cast the Crucifix*
“ *into the fire before his face,*
“ *and it did not burn, he would*
“ *turn Christian.* The Jesuit
“ would not venture the cre-
“ dit of his religion on so ha-
“ zardous an experiment, yet
“ offered to cast himself into
“ the fire, as a proof of his
“ own faith, which the King
“ would not allow.” For he
had sense enough to know
the difference, between the
effect of a miracle and a
martyrdom ; that the last
could prove nothing but the
Jesuit's sincerity, in what he
professed to believe ; where-
as the first would yield the
strongest confirmation to the
truth also of what he taught
[See Lett. from *Rome*, Prefat.
Disc. p. 100.]

“ annals,

“annals, and believe nothing at all [1].” And the same outcry, as *Eusebius* tells us, was made by them also against the Christians, when the Gospel first began to spread itself among them: “that to reject a belief and worship universally established by Kings, Legislators, and Philosophers of all nations, whether *Greeks* or *Barbarians*, was an impious apostacy from the rites of their ancestors, and a contradiction to the sense and judgement of mankind [2].” The Christians, on the other hand, constantly derided this plea, and declared, “that to follow the inventions of their ancestors, without any judgement or examinations, and to be led perpetually by others, like brute animals, was to preclude themselves from that search of wisdom and knowledge, which is natural to man [3].” Yet when it came at last to their own turn, to find the authority of ages on their side, they took up the same plea which they had before rejected; and urge it at this day, as the principal objection to Protestantism: “That it is a *mere novelty*, which had no existence in the world before *Luther*, contradictory to the practice of all the primitive Saints

[1] *Negemus omnia; comburamus annales; sc̄ta hæc esse dicamus, &c.* Cic. de *Divin.* l. i. 17.

[2] *Euseb. Præpar. Evangel.* l. i. c. 2.

[3] *Quare cum sapere, id*

est, sapientiam quærere, omnibus sit innatum; sapientiam sibi adimunt, qui sine ullo judicio inventa majorum probant, & ab aliis, pecudum more, ducuntur, &c. Lactant. *Divin. Instit.* l. ii. c. 8.

“ and Martyrs of the Catholic Church, and to
“ the unanimous consent of fifteen centuries.”

If this objection therefore had ever been found to have any force in it, the ancient Christians could never have over-ruled the impositions of Paganism; nor our Reformers, the superstitions of Popery. But in truth, when it comes to be seriously considered, it will appear to have no sense at all in it: and if the Doctors *Chapman* and *Berriman*, who now revive and so zealously urge it, were called upon to explain themselves upon it, they would find it difficult, I dare say, to tell us what they mean by it. If they mean, that a contempt of those miracles, which they would persuade us to believe, would necessarily derive the same contempt on history itself, all experience has shewn the contrary; for though there have been doubters and contemners of such miracles in all ages, yet history has maintained its ground through them all. During the three first centuries, the whole world in a manner not onely doubted, but rejected the miracles of the primitive Christians: yet history was written and read with the same pleasure and profit as before, and applied by the unbelievers themselves to the confirmation of their very doubts. Our commerce with the times past, as they are represented to us in history, is of much the same kind, with our manner of dealing with the present. We find many men in the world, whose fidelity we have just ground to suspect; yet a number of others, whom we

can readily trust, sufficient to support that credit and mutual confidence, by which the business of life is carried on: just so in ancient History; we find many things of which we have cause to doubt; many, which we are obliged to reject; yet its use still subsists, and from real and indisputable facts, supplies sufficient matter both of instruction and entertainment to every judicious reader.

If our Doctors therefore mean any thing by the objection, which we are examining, it must be this; that the same principle, which induces us to suspect the primitive miracles, and particularly those of *Simeon Stylites*, when so forcibly and credibly attested, must induce us also, if we are consistent with ourselves, to suspect every thing, that is delivered to us from ancient history. But they widely mistake the matter; and do not at all reflect on what I have intimated above, that the history of miracles is of a kind totally different from that of common events, the one, to be suspected always of course, without the strongest evidence to confirm it; the other, to be admitted of course, without as strong reason to suspect it. Ordinary facts, related by a credible person, furnish no cause of doubting from the nature of the thing: but if they be strange and extraordinary, doubts naturally arise, and in proportion as they approach towards the marvellous, those doubts still increase and grow stronger: for mere honesty will not warrant them; we require other qualities in
the

the Historian; a degree of knowledge, experience, and discernment, sufficient to judge of the whole nature and circumstances of the case: and if any of these be wanting, we necessarily suspend our belief. A weak man, indeed, if honest, may attest common events as credibly as the wisest; yet can hardly make any report, that is credible, of such as are miraculous; because a suspicion will always occur, that his weakness, and imperfect knowledge of the extent of human art, had been imposed upon by the craft of cunning Jugglers. On the other hand, should a man of known abilities and judgement, relate to us things miraculous, or undertake to perform them himself, the very notion of his skill, without an assurance also of his integrity, would excite onely the greater suspicion of him [1]; especially, if he had any interest to promote, or any favorite opinion to recommend, by the authority of such works: because a pretension to miracles, has in all ages and nations, been found the most effectual instrument of Impostors, towards deluding the multitude, and gaining their ends upon them.

There is not a single Historian of Antiquity, whether Greek or Latin, who has not recorded *Oracles, prodigies, prophecies, and miracles*, on the occasion of some memorable events, or revolutions of States and Kingdoms. Many of these are attested in the gravest manner, and by the

[1] Quo quis versutior & callidior est, hoc invidiosior & suspensior. detracta opinione prohibetis. Cic. Off. ii. 9.

graveſt writers, and were firmly believed at the time by the populace : yet it is certain, that there is not one of them which we can reaſonably take to be genuin : not one, but what was either wholly forged, or, from the opportunity of ſome unuſual circumſtance attending it, improved and aggravated into ſomething ſupernatural. This was undoubtedly the caſe of all the Hea-then miracles ; and though it may hurt in ſome meaſure the general credit of miracles, yet, as experience has plainly ſhewn, it has not in any degree affected the credit of common hiſtory. For example, *Dionyſus of Halicarnaſſus* is eſteemed one of the moſt faithful and accurate Hiſtorians of Antiquity : we take his word without ſcruple, and preferably even to the Roman writers, in his account of the civil affairs of *Rome* ; yet we laugh at the fictitious miracles which he has interſperſed in it. “ In the war with the “ *Latins*, he tells us, how the Gods, *Caſtor* and “ *Pellux*, appeared viſibly on white horſes, and “ fought on the ſide of the *Romans*, who, by “ their aſſiſtance, gained a complete victory ; “ and that for a perpetual memorial of it, a “ Temple was publicly erected, and a yearly “ feſtival, ſacrifice, and proceſſion, inſtituted to “ the honor of thoſe Deities [1].” Now tho’

[1] Vid. Dionyſ. Hal. An-
tiqu. l. vi. p. 357. Edit. Ox-
on.

N. B. A late Hiſtorian of
our own Kingdom, in his de-

ſcription of the battel of *Wor-
ceſter*, between *Charles II.* and
Oliver Cromwell, has deliver-
ed a ſtory to poſterity, con-
cerning a certain contract

nobody at this day believes a tittle of the miracle, yet the faith of History is not hurt by it. We admit the battel and the victory; and take the miraculous part to be, what it certainly was, the fiction of the Commanders or persons interested; contrived for the sake of some private, as well as public benefit, which the nature of the case will easily suggest.

Thus in the narrative also, above mentioned, of the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, the point of history is, that he was condemned to death at *Smyrna*, of which he was Bishop, and there actually burnt at the Stake, for his profession of the Christian faith. We have no doubt therefore of his Martyrdom, yet may reasonably pause at the miracles, which are said to have attended it. The voice pretended to come from heaven, was heard onely by a few, and that in a time of such hurry, in which nothing could be heard distinctly. If such a voice therefore had been uttered by any one in the croud, as it was hardly possible to discern whence it came, so those whose zeal and imagination were particu-

made in form, between *Oliver and the Devil*, in a personal conference. Which story was so strongly attested, that he thought himself obliged to insert it, as I heard him say, by the advice of some learned friends. But the faith of history would rest on a very slippery bottom, could it be shaken in any de-

gree by our contempt of so silly a tale: which though no man of a sound judgement can think credible, yet none will conceive the least doubt on that account, about the reality of the battel, or the other circumstances of it, as they are related by the same historian. See Eclard's *Hist. of Engl.*

larly affected by so moving an occasion, might easily mistake it for miraculous. The flame also is said to have made an arch around his body, and could not burn it: an appearance, which might easily happen from the common effects of the wind, or something at least so like it, as to afford matter enough to a superstitious fancy, to supply the rest. But the circumstance of a *Dove flying out of his body, when pierced by a sword*, is beyond all belief: or if a *Dove* was really seen to fly out of the wood, which was prepared to consume him, it might have been conveyed thither, probably by design, in order to be let loose at a certain moment: as in the funerals of the Roman Emperors, an Eagle was always observed to fly out of the funeral pile, as soon as it began to blaze, which was supposed to convey the soul of the deceased into heaven: of which a solemn deposition was constantly made upon oath, in order to the Deification of those Emperors [1].

But the case of witchcraft affords the most effectual proof of the truth of what I am advancing. There is not in all history any one mira-

[1] Ἀλλ' ὅτι τις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀρβυλαῖς ἀνπλάσῃ, εἰς ἢ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῆ εἰς τὸν ἔραν ἀναβῆναι. Dio. de Fun. August. l. lvi. p. 598.

Γνωμὴ δὲ τῆς, αὐτῆς τις ἐξ αὐτῆ ἀνπλάσῃ ἢ ὁ μὲν Πέρσιος ἔτος ἠθανάσθη. Id. de Fun. Pertinac. l. lxxiv. p. 842.

Καὶ τί γὰρ τὸς ἀποθνήσκοντας παρ' ὑμῶν αὐτοκράτορας αἰεὶ ἀπαθανάσιζουσαι ἀξιώσεις, ἢ ὁμολογεῖται πῶς πρὸς γένη ἐωρακέναι ἐκ τῆς πυρῆς ἀνερχόμενον εἰς τὸν ἔραν τὸν καλακαῖσα Καίσαρα. Just. Martyr. Apol. i. p. 32. Ed. Thirlb.

culous fact, so authentically attested as the existence of witches. All Christian nations whatsoever have consented in the belief of them, and provided capital laws against them: in consequence of which, many hundreds of both sexes have suffered a cruel death. In our own country, great numbers have been condemned to die, at different times, after a public trial, by the most eminent Judges of the Kingdom: and in some places, for a perpetual memorial of their diabolical practices, anniversary sermons and solemnities have been piously instituted, and subsist at this day, to propagate a detestation of them to all posterity [1]. Now to deny the re-

[1] In the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* reign, the Court seems to have been greatly alarmed by an imaginary increase of this Infernal Art, and the horrible mischiefs which it was then actually perpetrating in the Kingdom; and which were loudly proclaimed from the Pulpit, by many of the celebrated Preachers. Among the rest, it is surprizing to perceive, to what a length of superstition and credulity, the great Bishop *Jewel* was carried on this occasion, by his prejudices and prepossession in favor of this popular delusion: a Prelate as venerable for his piety, learning, and judgement, as any in the

earliest ages of the Church: who, in a sermon preached before the Queen, taking occasion to touch upon this subject, addresses himself to Her in the following words: "It may please your Grace to understand, that this kind of People, I mean witches and forcerers, within these few years are marvelously increased within your Grace's realm. These eyes have seen most evident and manifest marks of their wickedness. Your Grace's subjects pine away, even unto death; their color fadeth; their flesh rotteth; their speech is benumbed; their senses bereft. Wherefore your poor subjects
ality

ality of Facts, so solemnly attested, and so uni-

“humble petition to your
 “Highness is, that the laws
 “touching such Malefactors
 “may be put in due execu-
 “tion. For the shoal of
 “them is great, their doings
 “horrible, their malice in-
 “tolerable, their examples
 “most miserable: and I pray
 “God, they never practise
 “farther than upon the sub-
 “ject.” Upon which passage
 Mr. *Styrc* remarks, that the
 remonstrances of this kind
 made by this Bishop and o-
 thers, gave occasion, *to bring*
a Bill into the next Parliament,
for making Inchantments and
Witchcraft Felony. See annals
at the Reformat. vol. i. p. 3.

When *Tertullian*, in proof
 of the miraculous powers,
 which were claimed by the
 Christians of that age, chal-
 lenges the Heathen Magi-
 strates, to come and see how
 easily the Christian *Exorcists*
 could drive Devils out of the
 bodies of men, he might be
 assured probably at the same
 time, that the notice of his
 challenge would never reach
 those Magistrates, or at least,
 that they would never pay
 any regard to it: yet plum-
 ing himself, as it were, upon
 it, he adds, *and what can be*
more manifest than this opera-

tion, what more convincing than
this proof? [Apolog. c. xxiii.]
 But I would ask the warmest
 advocates of the primitive
 miracles, whether this *con-*
vincing proof of Tertullian, or
 the express testimony of any
 other Father, or any number
 of them, can in any man-
 ner be compared with that
 strength of evidence, which,
 through all ages, affirmed
 the existence of witches and
 their direful practices, by the
 most solemn acts of Kings
 and Parliaments, and whole
 nations; who, after many
 public trials, and the strictest
 examinations, have constant-
 ly attested the reality of the
 facts and crimes, with which
 they were charged, of inflict-
 ing horrible pains and dis-
 eases, and destroying the lives
 of many innocent people, by
 the force of their charms and
 forceries. See the printed
 trials of *nineteen witches*, ten
 of whom were condemned
 together at *Lancaster*, 1612,
 where the Judge, in passing
 sentence of death upon them,
 speaks of *many cruel and bar-*
barous murders, of which they
 had been guilty, besides other
 crimes, of tormenting the bod-
 ies, and destroying the cat-
 tle of their neighbours.

verfally

verfally believed, feems to give the lie to the fenfe and experience of all Chriftendom; to the wifeft and beft of every nation, to public monuments fubfifting to our own times: yet the incredibility of the thing prevailed, and was found at laft too ftrong for all this force of human testimony: fo that the belief of witches is now utterly extinguiſhed, and quietly buried without involving hiſtory in its ruin, or leaving even the leaſt diſgrace or censure upon it.

There is another inſtance alſo, within our own times, more directly applicable to our preſent purpoſe. I mean the pretended miracles of the late Abbé de Paris, which made ſuch a noiſe in France a few years ago, and are ſtill believed by a great part of that Kingdom, or by all perhaps, who believe any other miracles of that Church. This Abbé was a zealous *Janſeniſt*, and warm oppoſer of that Bull or Conſtitution of Pope *Clemens XI.* called *Unigenitus*, by which all the doctrines of his ſect were expreſſly condemned. He died in 1725, and was buried in the Church-yard of *St. Médard* in *Paris*; whither the great reputation of his ſanctity drew many people to viſit his tomb, and pay their devotions to him, as to a Saint: and this concurrence gradually increaſing, made him ſoon be conſidered as a ſubject, proper to revive the credit of that party, now utterly depreſſed by the power of the *Jefuits*, ſupported by the authority of the Court. Within ſix years therefore after his death, the confident

Z 3

report

report of miracles, wrought at his tomb, began to alarm not only the city of *Paris*, but the whole nation: while infinite crouds were perpetually pressing to the place, and proclaiming the benefits received from the Saint; nor could all the power of the Government give a check to the rapidity of this superstition, till by inclosing the tomb within a wall, they effectually obstructed all access to it [1].

This expedient, though it put an end to the external worship of the Saint, could not shake the credit of his miracles: distinct accounts of which were carefully drawn up, and dispersed among the people, with an attestation of them much more strong and authentic, than what has ever been alledged for the miracles of any other age, since the days of the Apostles. *Mons. de Montgeron*, a person of eminent rank in *Paris* [2], published a select number of them, in a pompous volume in quarto, which he dedicated to the King, and presented to him in person; being induced to the publication of them, as he declares, by the incontestible evidence of the facts; by which he himself, from a libertin and professed Deist, became a sincere convert to the Christian faith. But besides the collection of

[1] This step gave occasion to the following Epigram, which was fixed upon the inclosure, in the style of the Royal Edicts:

De par le Roy. Defense à
Dieu
De faire miracles, en ce
lieu.

[2] Conseillier au Parlement de Paris.

Mr.

Mr. *de Montgeron*, several other collections were made, containing in the whole above an hundred miracles, which are all published together in three volumes, with their original vouchers, certificates, affidavits, and letters, annexed to each of them at full length.

The greatest part of these miracles were employed in the cures of desperate diseases, in their last and deplored state, and after all human remedies had for many years been tried upon them in vain : but the Patients no sooner addressed themselves to the tomb of this Saint, than the most inveterate cases, and complications of Palsies, Apoplexies, and Dropsies, and even Blindness and Lameness, &c. were either instantly cured, or greatly relieved, and within a short time after wholly removed. All which cures were performed in the Church-yard of *St. Medard*, in the open view of the people, and with so general a belief of the finger of God in them, that many *Infidels*, *Debauchees*, *Schismatics*, and *Heretics*, are said to have been converted by them to the Catholic faith. And the reality of them is attested by some of the principal Physicians and Surgeons in France, as well as the Clergy of the first dignity ; several of whom were eye-witnesses of them, who presented a verbal process of each to the Archbishops, with a petition, signed by above twenty Cures, or Rectors of the Parishes of *Paris*, desiring that they might be authentically registred,

and solemnly published to the people, as true miracles.

I have seen an answer to these miracles by a Protestant writer, Mr. *Des Voeux*; who does not deny the facts, but the miraculous nature of them onely, which by many reasons he endeavours to render suspected. Yet another writer on the same side, declares, that all his reasons are too weak to do them any hurt; and that there is no other way of shaking their credit, than by shewing them to be the works of the Devil. Which he undertakes to prove, in three letters to the said Mr. *Des Voeux*, to be the genuine character of them.

Let our Declamers then on the authority of the Fathers, and the faith of history, produce if they can, any evidence of the primitive miracles, half so strong, as what is alledged for the miracles of the *Abbé de Paris*: or if they cannot do it, let them give us a reason, why we must receive the one and reject the other; or if they fail likewise in this, let them be so ingenuous at last as to confess, that we have no other part left, but either to admit them all, or reject them all; for otherwise, they can never be thought to act consistently. And if, from their avowed principles and blind deference to authority, we may guess at their real sentiments in the present case, they will be as little scrupulous about the modern, as the ancient miracles of the Church, but patiently admit them all; as being more agreeable to that rule, which is prescribed

scribed by their primitive Guides; “ that the
 “ true disciples of Christ, *have nothing more to*
 “ *do with curiosity or inquiry, but when they are*
 “ *once become believers, their sole business is to be-*
 “ *lieve on* [1].”

Again, the celebrated Historian, Mr. *de Vertot*, whose *Revolutions of Rome, of Sweden, and of Portugal*, afford so much entertainment to the public, has written a defence also of a certain miracle, which is imagined to do some honor to the Church and Kingdom of *France*: I mean the miracle of *the sacred vial, or Sainte Ampoulle*, as it is called, with which their Kings are anointed at their coronation [2].

This Vial is said to have been brought from heaven by a Dove, for the baptismal unction of

[1] Nobis curiositate non opus est post Jesum Christum, nec inquisitione post Evangelium; cum credimus, nihil desideramus ultra credere. Tertull. de Præscript. Hæret. § VIII.

[2] The Abbé de Vertot begins his Dissertation on this vial, in the following manner:

“ There has scarce ever
 “ been a more sensible and
 “ illustrious mark of the vi-
 “ sible protection of God,
 “ over the Monarchy of
 “ *France*, than the celebrated
 “ miracle of the sacred vial.
 “ On the day of Great Clo-

“ *vis's* baptism, heaven de-
 “ clared itself in favor of that
 “ prince and his successors,
 “ in a particular manner;
 “ and, by way of preference
 “ to all the other Sovereigns
 “ of Christendom. So that
 “ we may justly apply to eve-
 “ ry one of our Kings, on
 “ the day of their corona-
 “ tion, the words of the Roy-
 “ al Prophet: *God, even thy*
 “ *God, has anointed thee with*
 “ *the oil of gladness, above thy*
 “ *fellows.*” Dissertat. au sujet
 de la sainte Ampoulle—Dans
 les Memoires de l'Acad. des
 Inscript. & Bell. Let. tom. ii.
 p. 665.

Clovis,

Clovis, the first Christian King of France, and dropped into the hands of St. Remigius, then Bishop of Rheims, about the end of the fifth century: where it has been preserved ever since for the purpose of anointing all succeeding Kings [1], and its divine descent is said to be confirmed by this miracle; that as soon as the coronation is over, the oil in the Vial begins to waste and vanish, but is constantly renewed of itself, for the service of each new coronation [2].

The *Abbé de Vertot* defends the truth of this miracle by the authority of several witnesses, who lived at the time of *Remigius*, or near to it; and of many later writers also, who give testimony to the same, through each succeeding age. Yet a learned Professor at *Utrecht*, in a dissertation upon this subject, treats it as a mere forgery, or pious fraud, contrived to support the dignity of the *Kings and Clergy of France*; and ranks it in the same class with the *Palladium of Troy, the Ancilia of old Rome, and the Cross, which Constantin pretended to see in the heavens*; and the rest of those political fictions, which we meet with in the histories of all ages [3].

[1]

Idem primus & omnes

Post ipsum Reges, Francorum ad scepra vocati,
Quando coronantur, oleo sacrantur eodem.

Ib. p. 674.

[2]

Cujus prece rorem

Misit in Ampullam cœlestem Rector Olympi,
Corpus ut hoc lavacro Regis deberet iungi,
Desideretque liquor, ibi corpore Regis inuncto.

Nic. de Braia, De S. Remigio.

[3] Vid. Everard. Ottonis J. C. Dissertat. &c. § iv. p. 365.

Now

Now what will our Advocates of the primitive miracles say to this? Will they tell us here, as they have often done on similar occasions, that by rejecting the authority of Mr. *Vertot*, and his witnesses, in this story, we destroy the faith of all his other stories, and can no longer take his word for any thing, which he has related of *Rome*, or *Sweden*, or *Portugal*? Let them talk at this silly rate as long as they please, men of sense will always know how to distinguish in such cases; how to extract all the instruction which is offered to them, in one part of his writings; yet guard themselves from all the superstition, which is inculcated in the other. They know, that on subjects of common history, a writer of sense and credit can hardly have any other motive of writing, but to please and instruct; and to illustrate the truth of facts, as far as he was able, by the perspicuity of his style, and the proper disposition of his materials: but on subjects of a miraculous kind, they know likewise, how forcibly the prejudices of education, a superstitious turn of mind, the interests of a party, or the views of ambition, are apt to operate on a defender of those miracles, which the government and religion of his country are engaged to support. These few instances are sufficient to evince

De Unctione Remensi. Traject. ad Rhen. quarto. 1723.
Trojani Palladium.—Virgilius lapsa Ancilia caelo—ve-

neratur. Constantinus, literas ἐν τῷ τῷ νίκῃ in caelo legisse fertur, &c. vid. ibid.

the reasonableness and prudence of suspending our assent to reports of a miraculous kind, tho' attested by an authority, which might safely be trusted in the report of ordinary events. They teach us also how opinions, wholly absurd and contrary to nature, may gain credit and establishment through ages and nations, which, by the force of education, custom, and example, have once contracted a superstitious and credulous turn: till being checked from time to time by the gradual improvements of science, and the successive efforts of reason, inquiring occasionally into the uncertain grounds, and reflecting on the certain mischiefs of them, they have fallen at last into such utter contempt, as to make us wonder, how it was possible for them, ever to have obtained any credit.

But whatever be the uncertainty of ancient history, there is one thing at least, which we may certainly learn from it, that human nature has always been the same; agitated by the same appetites and passions, and liable to the same excuses and abuses of them, in all ages and countries of the world; so that our experience of what passes in the present age, will be the best comment on what is delivered to us concerning the past. To apply it then to the case before us; there is hardly a single fact, which I have charged upon the primitive times, but what we still see performed, in one or other of the Sects of Christians of our own times. Among some we see *diseases cured, Devils cast out,*
and

and all the other miracles, which are said to have been wrought in the primitive Church : among others, we see the boasted gifts of *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days ; *pretended revelations, prophetic visions, and divine impressions* : now all these modern pretensions we readily ascribe to their true cause ; to the artifices and craft of a few, playing upon the credulity, the superstition, and the enthusiasm of the many, for the sake of some private interest : when we read therefore, that the same things were performed by the ancients, and for the same ends, of acquiring a superiority of credit, or wealth, or power, over their fellow creatures, how can we possibly hesitate, to impute them to the same cause, of fraud and imposture ?

In a word ; to submit our belief implicitly and indifferently, to the mere force of authority, in all cases, whether miraculous or natural, without any rule of discerning the credible from the incredible, might support indeed the faith, as it is called, but would certainly destroy the use, of all history ; by leading us into perpetual errors, and possessing our minds with invincible prejudices, and false notions, both of men and things. But to distinguish between things, totally different from each other ; between miracle and nature ; the extraordinary acts of God, and the ordinary transactions of man ; to suspend our belief of the one, while, on the same testimony, we grant it freely to the other ; and to require a different degree of evidence for each,

each, in proportion to the different degrees of their credibility; is so far from hurting the credit of history, or of any thing else, which we ought to believe, that it is the onely way to purge history from its dross, and render it beneficial to us; and by a right use of our reason and judgement, to raise our minds above the low prejudices, and childish superstitions; of the credulous vulgar.

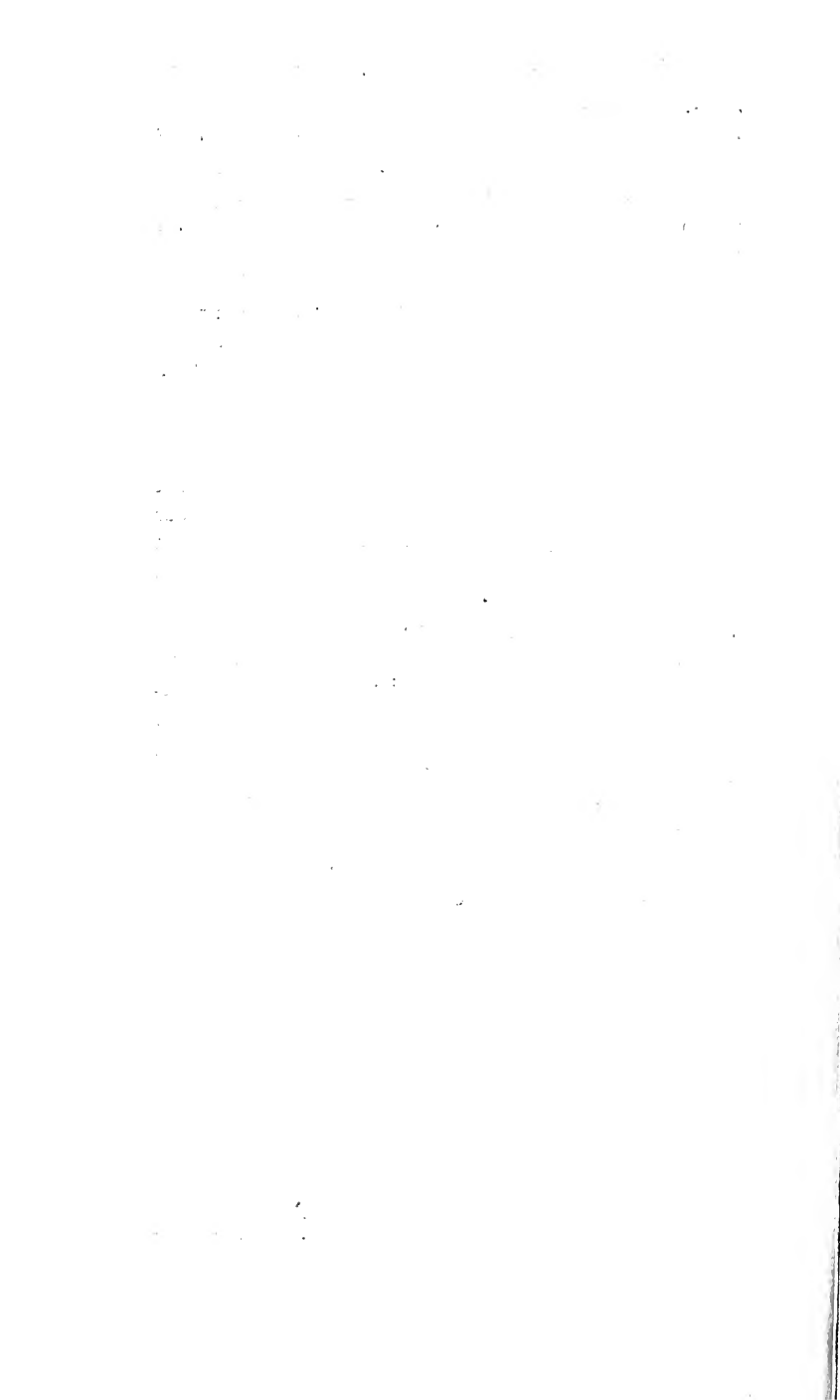
There cannot be a stronger proof of the stupid credulity and superstition of those primitive ages, into which we have been inquiring, and of the facility of imposing any fictions upon them, which their leaders thought fit to inculcate, that what is related by *St. Austin*, from the report, as he says, of *credible persons*, “ that at *Ephesus*, “ where *St. John*, the Apostle, lay buried, he was “ not believed to be dead, “ but to be sleeping onely “ in the grave, which he “ had provided for himself, “ till our Lord’s second coming: in proof of which, “ they affirmed, that the “ earth, under which he lay, “ was seen to heave up and “ down perpetually, in conformity to the motion of “ his body, in the act of “ breathing.” Which ridiculous conceit was grounded

on those words spoken by our Lord of that Apostle, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* Whence the other Apostles inferred, *that St. John should not die.* [Jo. xxi. 23.] vid. *Augustin.* in loc. Oper. T. iii. p. 819, 820.

But we have another instance, in our own country, of a credulity not less extravagant, than what is just mentioned, in the case of a person believed to be possessed by the Devil; an account of which was printed and published with the following title: “ *The Surey Demoniac.* Or an account of “ *Satan’s* strange and dreadful Actings, in and about “ the body of *Richard Dugdale*, of *Surey* near *Whalley* “ in *Lancashire*. And how “ he was dispossessed by “ *God’s* blessing on the Fastings and Prayers of divers “ Ministers

“ Ministers and people. The
 “ matter of fact attested by
 “ the oaths of several credi-
 “ ble persons, before some
 “ of his Majesty’s Justices of
 “ the peace in the said
 “ County. London 1697.”
 —These dreadful actings of
Satan continued above a
 year: during which, there
 was a desperate struggle be-
 tween him, and nine Mini-
 sters of the Gospel, who had
 undertaken to cast him out;
 and for that purpose, succes-
 sively relieved each other in
 their daily combats with
 him: while *Satan*, as in the
 days of *Tertullian*, tried all
 his arts to baffle their at-
 tempts; insulting them with
 scoffs and raillery; puzzling
 them sometimes, with Latin
 and Greek, and threatenng
 them with the effects of his
 vengeance; till he was final-
 ly vanquished and put to
 flight by the persevering

prayers and fastings of the
 said Ministers: the truth of
 which fact is more substan-
 tially attested, than any case
 of the same kind, in all
 the primitive ages. *Mons. de*
Fontenelle, a writer justly ce-
 lebrated for his admirable
 parts and learning, speaking
 of the origin and progress of
 these popular superstitions,
 says, “ Give me but half a
 “ dozen persons, whom I
 “ can persuade, that it is not
 “ the sun, which makes our
 “ day-light, and I should not
 “ despair of drawing whole
 “ nations to embrace the
 “ same belief. For how ri-
 “ diculous soever the opi-
 “ nion be, let it be support-
 “ ed onely for a certain time,
 “ and the business is done;
 “ for when it once becomes
 “ ancient, it is sufficiently
 “ proved.”—*Hist. des Ora-*
cles, c. xi.



Dr. *MIDDLETON*'s
L E T T E R S
T O
Mr. *WARBURTON*.

VOL. I.

A 2



LETTER I.

Dorchester, Sept. 11, 1736.

S I R,

YOUR Candor, I hope, has already prevented me in suggesting some favourable excuse for my long silence. The truth, which is always the best apology, is, that I was absent from *Cambridge* when your letter arrived there; and though it was transmitted to me at this place, yet it found me in no condition to answer it, either to your satisfaction or my own. I am here unprovided of *Tully's* works, and without the help of my papers to furnish any hints to me on the subject; spending my time suitably to the taste and temptations of the country, in cards at home and sports abroad; yet I could not longer defer to pay my thanks at least for the great entertainment that it gave me; with promise of further payment, as soon as I am able.

The point that you undertook to make good concerning *Tully*, is, that *he did not believe a future state*. In proof of which you maintain, that in *his Epistles onely*, of all his works, we are to look for *his real sentiments*.

This, though supported by you very ingeniously, is not, I own, agreeable to the notion that I had formed, from my general acquaint-

ance with his writings : and as I have not yet had leisure to make it the subject of a particular enquiry, so at present I can only give my loose and indigested thoughts on the matter ; which I shall do very freely, and in the method that you have sketched out to me.

You assign four reasons of the difficulty of discovering *Tully's* opinions on the important questions of philosophy. 1. The character of the ancient philosophy in general. 2. The manner in which the *Romans* received the *Greek* philosophy. 3. The nature of that philosophy, which *Tully* espoused. 4. The peculiar character of the man.

1. By the first, you mean *the double doctrine* of the old masters ; *the external and internal* ; the one for the vulgar, the other for the adept. But whatever effect this had in *Greece*, where that way of teaching seems to have been dropped long before *Tully*, it certainly had none in *Rome*, or at least in *Tully's* writings : the end and purpose of which was, to explain to his countrymen, in the most perspicuous manner, whatever the ancients had taught on every article, either of speculative or practical knowledge.

2. *The Romans*, you say, were far from the humour of the *Greeks* ; and did not regard the doctrine of the sect, that they espoused, as a rule of life, but a kind of furniture only for their rhetoric schools. But I see no ground for this distinction ; if there was any between them, the *Greeks* were certainly the more disputatious, and, agreeably

agreeably to *St. Paul's* character of them, more curious and fond of *every thing new*. *Cato*, you see, from the testimony that you produce, made the *Stoical doctrine his rule of living*; and tho' he is laughed at for it by *Cicero*, yet not for making philosophy his rule, but that particular philosophy, which was incompatible with common life.

There is a letter from *Tully* to *Trebatius*, upon his turning Epicurean; in which he rallies him for his new principles, which must necessarily spoil the lawyer, as breaking through all the old forms of securing faith and property amongst men: and concludes, *that if he was serious in the change, he was sorry for it; if to make his court onely to Pansa, he excused it.* (Fam. l. vii. 12.) This shews, that the choice of a sect was not thought a thing indifferent, but supposed to operate in life and manners. If then, as *Tully* says, a great part took up their philosophy *disputandi causa, non ita vivendi*; yet this was not the thing generally thought blameable. Nor was it peculiar to the *Romans*, any more than to the *Greeks*, or to any other people, *not to live up to the rule that they professed*; just as we see it now in the case of Religion, which a great part in all countries contend for very warmly, yet practise very coldly.

3. You make *the nature of Tully's philosophy* another source of difficulty, in finding out his real sentiments. His philosophy was *of the Academy*; and whether of the old or the new, much

the same. But when you call it *perfectly sceptical*, you seem to confound it with a different sect, whose distinguishing character was to *doubt of every thing*: whereas the principle of the academy was onely to *suspend their assent*, till by examining all sides of a question, they could discover *the probable*. For in speculative enquiries they disclaimed *all certainty*, and thought nothing so unworthy of a philosopher, as a *rash assent*, and the embracing for true what he did not comprehend. They imagined truth and falshood to be so mixed and blended by nature, that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate them entirely; that probability was the utmost that human wit could arrive at. This therefore they made *their rule*, both of thinking and acting. What the other sects affirmed with assurance, they made it their task to confute, or shew to be *uncertain*; taking from each still, what they liked, and following it, with this difference onely, that what the others called *true*, they called *probable*.

This, of all others, was the most rational way of philosophizing; subjecting them to no matter, no system of opinions; but leaving a liberty to chuse, after a free enquiry, whatever was found most agreeable to reason and nature. But what is there in this to create difficulty in discovering a man's opinions, whenever he thinks fit to declare them? It might create, perhaps, some diffidence in declaring them; and a disposition, to confute rather what others
 assert,

assert, than to assert any thing of his own: but their rule still was as certain and consistent as of any other sect; and when persuaded, of any opinion, they pursued it as regularly, and explained as freely, as any of the rest.

4. But the *Embarrass*, you say, is *compleated by the peculiar character of the man*; which you consider in three different capacities, of *the Orator, the Statesman, the Philosopher*; and contend, that he not only contradicts in one, what he affirms in another, but *is inconsistent with himself, even when he speaks from one and the same person*: yet from the best attention, that I have been able to pay to his History, I find in him but one general, consistent, glorious character, of a great and good man, acting and speaking on all occasions, what the greatest prudence, with the greatest virtue, would suggest.

As an Orator, it was his business to enforce, with all the power of eloquence, whatever he thought serviceable to his client, and useful to the cause that he was defending. Of this part he acquitted himself with glory; and tells us himself, what the nature of the thing would tell us for him, that we are not to expect his real sentiments here.

As a Statesman, the case is still the same. In his harangues to the people he gives a different account, you observe, of the same fact, from what he had done in the Senate; that is, he adapts his style and arguments to the different ge-

nius of each assembly ; to engage them both the more effectually to promote the measures that he was then pursuing.

As a Philosopher ; if we join the character of an Academic, we shall find him equally consistent. For I cannot help agreeing with *Bentley*, in taking this *for the key* of his philosophical writings, as much as I do with you, in your fixing the time of his changing the Academy. This was the philosophy that he professed thro' life ; and to which he professes himself indebted for all his success in it : and this clue will lead us through *that labyrinth of contradiction*, which you seem to discover in his works.

In his book of Divination, you say, *he combats all Augury*, but in his book of Laws *declares for it ; in a manner too serious to suspect him of feigning*. Yet all the matter is, that in the one he acts the philosopher, in the other the statesman : in his treatise on Divination, he asserts and establishes it in the first book, in the person of his brother, by all the arguments that can be brought for it ; and refutes them all in the second, in his own person. This is the true spirit of the Academy ; after examining both sides, to reject what has nothing solid in it. Yet in his *Treatise on Laws*, he recommends *Augury* ; and no wonder : for though he laughed at it as a philosopher, he had a great opinion of it as a politician : and always speaks of *the invention of its ceremonies, and the making them part of the civil constitution, as an instance of the greatest*

greatest wisdom and prudence in their ancestors. For it was wholly agreeable to that scheme of policy, which he constantly pursued, from the beginning to the end of life, of throwing the chief influence and balance of power in state matters into the hands of the better sort.

Again, you take notice, that *in his book on the nature of the Gods*, he reflects on those, *as too curious or impertinent*, who were calling upon him on all occasions to declare his own opinion: *Qui autem requirunt, quid quaque de re ipsi sentiamus, curiosus id faciunt, quam necesse est.* (l. i. § 5.) yet *in his Academic Questions*, he swears, *that he always speaks what he thinks: Jurarem—me et ardere studio veri reperiendi, et ea sentire, quæ dicerem.* (l. iv. § 10.) In the first of these works, he professes onely to collect what the old philosophers had taught; and, according to the method of the Academy, to combat the opinion of one sect, with that of another, without declaring his own: so that the difficulty of discovering it is not owing here, as you intimate, *to any obscurity* in deliving it, but to his not delivering it at all. But *in the Academic Questions*, as far as I can understand the passage without the context to assist me, he does not swear, as you render it, *that he always speaks what he thinks*, but onely, *that he thinks what he is there speaking*: and if so, it confirms what I have been saying of the Academy, and its being *the true key of his sentiments.*

But you assert, *that his sentiments are not to be*

be collected from any of his writings, that were designed for the public, which include all but his Letters, because, in all his writings of that kind, he affected an obscurity. This is the first time that I have ever seen the character of *obscure* applied to Tully's writings: surely no man's style was ever farther removed from it, or more remarkably shining and perspicuous, than his. But the whole charge of obscurity, and all the contrast of sentiments found in different parts of his works may easily be solved, by considering onely the different circumstances in which they were delivered. By attending to this, we shall find his very contradictions to be consistencies, and nothing else but what was prudent and proper to be said by one and the same man; acting the different parts of the *Orator*, the *Statesman*, the *Philosopher*.

To come then at last to the principal point in question; the discovery of *his real thoughts concerning a future state, which are to be collected onely, you say, from his Epistles*. And so far I agree, that in familiar letters we may expect to find him more open and undisguised, and, as far as he touches any subject, treating it with less reserve, than in works designed for the public: yet all his Letters, as you allow, are not of this sort: in many of them it was his business to say, not so much what was true, as what would please. But let us see what he has actually said in the testimonies that you have produced from them. In a letter to *Atticus*,

(l. iv. 10.) *Sed de illa ambulatione, fors viderit, aut si qui est, qui curet, deus.* To *Torquatus*, (Ep. fam. l. vi. 3.) *Sed hæc consolatio levis est: illa gravior, qua te uti spero, ego certe utor: nec dum ero, angar ulla re, cum omni vacem culpa: et si non ero, sensu omnino carebo.* Again, (ib. iv.) *Deinde quod mihi ad consolationem commune tecum est, si jam vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab ea republica avellar, qua carendum esse doleam, præsertim, cum id sine ullo sensu futurum sit.* To *Toranius*, (ib. xxi.) *Cum consilio profici nihil possit, una ratio videtur, quicquid evenerit, ferre moderate, præsertim, cum omnium rerum mors sit extremum.* Nothing, you say, can be more express than these passages against a future state: and that Tully speaks in them his real sentiments, there is not the least room to doubt. They were letters of consolation to his friends, when he himself, by reason of the ill state of public affairs, most wanted consolation.

As to the first of these passages; you allow it to be a compliment to the philosophy of his friend *Atticus*, who was an Epicurean: and why is it not so too in the rest? In the first to *Torquatus*, as in that to *Atticus*, the case is put hypothetically *si non ero*: and the very use of such a topic in consolation, implies, that these friends also were Epicureans, and that he was administering comfort from their philosophy, not his own, as likely to have the more weight with them; or arguing, as we say, *ad hominem*, not expressing his real sentiments.

But as this is onely conjectural, and, as some may

may think, contrary to fact; let us try what other defence can be made, and what use in this case of our *Key of the Academy*. Though I have often reflected on these passages, yet my notion has always been, that *Tully did believe a future state*. The whole turn of his writings, and the tenor of his life, shew it: he lived expecting it, and always so as to deserve it; and declares it to be *a favorite opinion*, which, though possibly an error, he was resolved to indulge. But we must remember still, that he was an Academic; that is, that he believed it onely to *be probable*; and as probability necessarily admits the degrees of *more and less*, so it admits a variety likewise in the stability of our persuasion: and as *Tully* himself says, on another occasion, *Quis autem est, tanta quidem de re, quin varie secum ipse disputet?* In a melancholy hour, when the spirits are low, and the mind under a dejection, an argument appears in a very different light; objections acquire strength; and what humours the present chagrin, finds the readiest admission. These passages were evidently of this kind, written in his desponding moments; and, as you say, *when he himself most wanted consolation*. And if we allow them therefore to express what he really thought at the time, yet they prove nothing more, than that *he sometimes doubted of what he generally believed*; consistently with the character and principles of an Academic, who embraced *no opinions as certain*.

Thus, Sir, I have given you my free thoughts

ON

on what you were so good as to communicate with regard to *Tully*: I will not be answerable for the exactness of them; they are such onely as my recollection could furnish, without the help of *Tully's* works to refresh, or any testimonies to support them. But as I reserve the more exact consideration of this argument to the part of *Tully's* life, which was the most employed on philosophy, under *Cæsar's* tyranny, so I shall be obliged to you for imparting any further thoughts on the subject, either to confirm or confute what I have here offered: and if any occasion of books or friends should invite you again this winter to *Cambridge*, where I propose to be about *Michaelmas*, I beg you to be assured, that no man will be more ready to serve you, in any manner there, or better pleased to enjoy as much of your company, as your time and other friends will allow to,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

CONYERS MIDDLETON.

P. S. I should be glad to hear that your great work goes on successfully; and, as a sure omen of satisfying others, that you find more and more satisfaction from it yourself. When I was last in *London*, I met with a little piece, written with the same view, and on the same plan with yours, an anonymous letter from *Geneva*, evincing *the divine Mission of Moses, from the institution*

tion

tion of the Sabbatic year. The author sets out, like you, from this single Postulatum, that *Moses was a consummate Lawgiver*; and shews, that he could never have enjoined a law *so whimsical, impolitic, and hazardous*; exposing the people to certain famine, as oft as the preceding or following year proved barren; if He, who has all nature at command, had not warranted the success of it. The Letter is ingenious and sprightly, and dresses out, in a variety of colours, the absurdity of the institution, on the supposition of its being human. It is in *French*, and published in *Bibliothèque Germanique*, Tom. xxx.

But will not this gaiety of censuring the law be found too adventurous, and expose *your Postulatum itself* to some hazard? Especially when there is a *fact*, generally allowed by the learned, that seems to overturn all this specious reasoning at once; *viz. that this law of the Sabbatic year was never observed.* For if so, it may be objected, with some shew of reason, that *Moses* had charged himself with the issue of events too delicate, and beyond his reach, and imprudently enjoined what use and experience shewed to be impracticable.

I am apprehensive likewise, that your work will not stand wholly clear of objections: your scheme, as I take it, is to shew, that *so able a man as Moses could not possibly have emitted the doctrine of a future state, thought so necessary to Government by all other Legislators, had he not done it by the express direction of the Deity; and that under the*
miracu-

miraculous dispensations of the Theocracy, he could neither want it himself for the enforcing a respect to his laws, nor yet the people for the encouragement of their obedience. But what was the consequence? Why, the people were perpetually apostatizing either to the superstitions of *Egypt*, or the idolatries of *Canaan*; and tired with the load of their ceremonies, wholly dropped them at last, and sunk into all kinds of vice and profaneness; till the Prophets, in order to revive and preserve a sense of Religion amongst them, began to preach up the rational duties of Morality, and insinuate *the doctrine of a future state*.

As in the other case then, some may be apt to say, that *Moses* had instituted what could not be practised without ruin to the State; so in this, that he had overlooked, what could not be omitted without ruin to Religion.

I have taken the liberty to propose these hints, that, if you think them of weight, you may be better prepared to obviate them; if not, may proceed the more securely by seeing reason to slight them. As for myself, I can safely swear with *Tully*, that I have *a most ardent desire to find out the truth*: but as I have generally been disappointed in my enquiries, and more successful in finding what is false than what is true, so I begin, like him too, to grow a mere Academic, humbly content to take up with the *probable*. Whatever you have to offer me of this kind, I shall thankfully embrace; and though I expect

as much from you as I do from any man, yet, in the arduous subject on which you are engaged, I dare not venture to raise my expectations any higher.

LETTER II.

Cambridge, Nov. 30, 1736.

Dear Sir,

ON my return to *Cambridge*, my first and best entertainment was to find a long letter from you; which will ever give me pleasure in proportion to its bulk. I am much obliged to you for your friendly acceptance and construction of the freedom with which I treated your Dissertation on *Tully's* Philosophy, as well as of what I ventured to intimate in relation to your greater work. By your large view of both subjects you have set me right in some particulars, which I had advanced too hastily and applied improperly; but I have neither leisure nor ability at present to enter into a detail of them, as well for the arrear of business in which a long absence has involved me, as for a particular disorder and flux of rheum in my eyes, which disables me in great measure either from reading or writing, and makes it even difficult to discharge this present duty towards you. I must refer myself for a free discussion of all particulars to that personal conference, which you are

so good as to promise some time after Christmas, which I shall enjoy with great satisfaction, and expect with equal impatience.

I saw our friend *****, as I passed through *London*, whose thoughts seem to be more employed on moral and religious subjects, than on pushing his fortune in his profession; in which I wish him all success, for I take him to be an honest and deserving man. He professes himself a warm believer of Christianity; I am sorry that it is on no better grounds, than what you mention: for it is in opinions, as in estates; our possession gives a presumption of a good title, till the discovery of it oft betrays the weakness of the tenure. The lives and characters of the Fathers are more likely, in my opinion, to shake a settled, than confirm a wavering faith. For notorious weakness will in many cases discredit a testimony as effectually, as notorious wickedness: and we generally find but too much reason, in the most esteemed of them, to charge either the one or the other. Our ingenious friend ***** has, as you observe, rightly charged the source of infidelity on the miraculous history of each Testament: yet our Divines are continually haranguing upon it, as reflecting nothing but lustre and brightness on the evidences of both. But we need not wonder at the rashness of our ordinary Divines, when the great *Rogers* has declared, as I remember, in one of his sermons, that he could not believe the truth of *Moses's* pretensions, were it not for

the confirmation given to them by the Gospel. This I take to be a dangerous assertion, that faps the very foundations of Christianity; and superfedes at once the whole purpose of your intended work, by denying any original or intrinsic character of Divinity to the institution of *Moses*. The pleasure that I have in corresponding with many worthy and ingenious friends in different parts of the kingdom, has oft suggested a wish to me, that a club could be instituted of such, who are used to think, and able to write, for the discovery and defence of truth on every subject, that affects either private or public life, without regard to any party or interest whatsoever. But the difficulty is to find a set of men so independent and disinterested, as to be qualified to engage in such a cause, or indeed, to find a society that would bear them. The design, however, in the corruption even of these times, if executed with prudence, and with due respect to the government and constitution, might be of great service towards mitigating the indiscreet fierceness and prejudices both of Zealots and Sceptics, which seem likely in some time to endanger the public quiet.

As to the life of *Cicero*, I hope to get thro' the first rough draught of it by the next spring: but then to revise, correct, and digest it all to my mind; and especially to read over all his works, as I intend, for that purpose, will employ another year, before I can offer it to the public.

I hope

I hope your next letter will bring the confirmation of your promised visit to our University, and fix a short day for our expecting you, where I shall always be proud to testify, that I really am, what I profess myself to be,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend,

and servant,

C. M.

LETTER III.

Camb. April 9, 1737.

Dear Sir,

TH O' I find myself in no small hurry on the approach of my journey to *London*, whither I propose to set forward on *Monday* or *Tuesday*, yet I was resolved to snatch a moment for the payment of my thanks for your late obliging letters, as well as the journal, that came to my hands soon after the date of my last.— I had before seen the force of your critical genius, very successfully employed on *Shakespear*, but did not know that you had ever tried it on the *Latin* authors. I am pleased with several of your emendations, and transcribed them into the margin of my editions, though not equally with them all. It is a laudable and liberal amusement, to try now and then in our reading

the success of a conjecture ; but in the present state of the generality of old writers, it can hardly be thought a study fit to employ a life upon ; at least, not worthy, I am sure, of your talents and industry, which, instead of trifling on words, seem calculated rather to correct the opinions and manners of the world.

As to the *Plain Account* ; I heard *Whiston* say, that he told the Queen, that the Bishop did not understand the nature of the Sacrament so well now, as when sixteen years old. But for my part, I have not, I own, so contemptible a notion of the performance. We may observe through all ages, that there never was any rite or practice in the Church, derived from the Gospel, that in the course of a few years was not so perverted from its primitive use, as to want to be recalled to its first principles, and set right again by the original rule. The Author takes this to be the case of the Sacrament, and seems to have reason, not onely from the practice of this, but even of the earliest times of which we have any notice. For example : all his adversaries appeal to *Justin Martyr*, who wrote within fifty years of *St. John*, for a genuin account of the matter. Yet in his time we find, that after consecration, *the Deacons distributed the Bread and the Cup of Wine, mixed with Water, and carried portions to the Absent.* [Apol. i. p. 96. edit Thirl.] *Irenæus* declares *the mixture of water* to be the institution of Christ himself, [l. iv. c. 57. l. v. 2, 36.] and when some afterwards began

began to dispute and reject it, *Cyprian* affirmed it to be enjoined to him by a *special revelation from Heaven* [Ep. ad Cæcil. lxiii.] And *Theophylact* on his Comment on *John* xix. says, *pudefiant Armenii, qui aquam non miscent*. This may shew how little we are to depend on Antiquity in the case before us. I have no time to add more, but that I intend to return to *Cambridge* before the end of *May*, where I shall be heartily glad to receive you, and on all occasions to signify, that I am, with great truth, dear Sir,

Sincerely yours,

C. M.

L E T T E R I V.

Camb. Sept. 22, 1737.

Dear Sir,

I Began to be impatient to hear of your health, and what you were doing, till I received your last kind letter: and if there was occasion for any apology on your part, it could onely be, for not favouring me with it sooner. I shall always be desirous to shew any respect to your Friends; for that character with me will be a sure proof of their merit: but Dr. *Taylor* seems to be one of those few, who want no Testimonial, and whose ingenuous behaviour and conversation will easily recommend him to the esteem of men of sense. Pray let him know,

that I think myself obliged to him for his kind remembrance of me, and should be glad of any opportunity of cultivating his friendship.

The Life of *Cicero* proceeds but slowly, thro' many interruptions and avocations: I had an unexpected one lately, by a sudden call to *London*, to look after the Mastership of the Charterhouse; having been mentioned for it, without my application, by Sir *Robert*, and some other Great ones: but on my arrival in town I presently perceived, that the D. of *Newcastle* had been before hand with them, in securing it for one Mr. *Mann*, an old friend and companion of Lord *Godolphin*. So that I returned, as I have been forced to do before, with a few good words from those, who can as easily give good things. I have made however a considerable progress in my work; and am drawing it out into a legible form; and at your next visit to us, hope to give you a perusal of the whole, or at least of a great part of it. But as I find some difficulty in pleasing myself with it, I shall not be in haste to send it abroad; though whenever I do publish, am still inclined, as you and other friends have advised me, to print it by subscription.

I promise myself in the mean time much entertainment from your first volume: and, if you carry it to the Press yourself, shall expect that you make *Cambridge* your way, and take up your quarters with us; where on all occasions you will be as welcome as at home, and for any time that you find convenient. I am pleased with

with the manner of your address to the Free-thinkers, and obliged to you for your friendly intentions with regard to myself: and though I should be as proud to have the testimony of your judgement and good opinion as of any man, yet I would have you consider, how far such a declaration of it may expose you to a share of that envy, which has lain and still lies very heavy upon me.

I have never once looked in the Review, &c. the maxim, that you mention from it, is agreeable to the principles of the Author, and to make possession and establishments a test of truth, the sure way to banish reason and inquiry out of society. If from particular and national societies, we extend his rule to the universal one of mankind, what would become of Christianity itself, if a majority or novelty must be the criterion of true and false? we should have nothing left, but to join with *Tindale*, and maintain it to be *as old as the Creation*.

I am, Sir,

Your affect. friend

and servant,

C. M.

L E T T E R V.

*Feb. 8, 1737-8.**Dear Sir,*

I Deferred my thanks for your last obliging letter, till I could pay them at the same time for the kind present which you there promised, and which I have since received. But I have been forced still to defer them much longer than I intended, by a cruel disorder of my eyes, which seized me unluckily just before the publication of your Book, and quite disabled me from reading it; though, by the help of borrowed eyes, I have at last got through it. When *Tully's* writings were first spread through the world after his death, a spring broke out in one of his favourite Villa's, which was found excellent for weak eyes, and thought to be providentially supplied to assist towards the reading of his works. I wish that Providence, in whose cause you are more specially engaged, had furnished the same help to facilitate the lecture of your writings. I flatter myself, however, that my blindness is not of the judicial kind; since no man, I am sure, was either more desirous to read, or more willing to be convinced by you than myself; and though, by my unhappy disability, I have lost some share of the pleasure, and perhaps of the conviction, which I should other-

otherwise have received from your book, yet I resolve to make it up, by a more considerate and attentive perusal, as soon as my eyes will allow me: I beg leave in the mean while to assure you, that I found it very entertaining, very ingenious, very learned.

This would be satisfaction enough to the generality of Authors, whose end of writing is not so much truth, as praise: but that, I know, was not yours, or at least your primary end; for a writer of your genius will be allowed without that imputation, to enliven a dry subject with the embellishments of learning. I have the pleasure also to tell you, that I am exactly of your mind in your notion of *moral obligations*; as well as in the two capital propositions of your book, *That the doctrine of a future state is highly useful to society*; and, *That Magistrates have always inculcated it for the sake of that utility*. How much farther you will carry me I cannot promise, I wish it may be to the end; if not, I shall not charge it either to your fault or my own: for we are told by great authority, *That it is as necessary for the mind to yield to the evidence of what it perceives, as the balance to the weight*; and *impossible for it not to judge of things accordingly as they appear to it*; and we learn from daily experience, that different tempers and capacities form different judgements of the same thing: so that while my academic complexion leaves me groveling perhaps in the mire of doubts, or pursuing the faint track of probability,

bility, your more sanguin spirits, like the greater Mysteries, make you at once an *Autoptes*, and admit you to the joyous regions of clear day and intuition. But I cannot help attending to what, as *Cicero* tells me, a *Sicilian* wagg, *Epicarmus*, whispers, *Be on your guard, and do not believe, for those are the nerves of your mind*: but lest you should suspect that I follow onely Pagan authority, *Clemens* of *Alexandria* quotes the same passage, and adds, either from himself, or perhaps some better writer, that *incredulity has done much good in the world, credulity much evil*.

But to return to your book; as I have told you with great truth that it pleases me in general very highly, so I think it the part of a friend to acquaint you with some little objections, which I have either heard from others, or observed to it myself. Some take notice, that you treat the Free-thinkers too roughly, and that your address to them is a defiance rather and declaration of war, than an invitation to a conference; not likely therefore to conciliate their favour or attention, which ought to be the care of one who professes to write for their conviction. — *Ld. Shaftsbury's* raillery on *Mr. Locke* does not seem strange to me; a Philosopher, who at parting with life has nothing to preach but *its vanity*, certainly makes a poor figure, by shewing that he was deceived in the end, and mistaken in the use of it; and not that life itself, but that his pretensions to Philosophy

sophy were vain. — We are at a loss to know, why you rank the *Old-Whig* among the *Infidel writers*; we consider him as writing onely on dissenting principles, against tests and establishments, and suppose *C——r* or *F——r* to be the editor, who have not been thought enemies to revealed Religion. For want of taking notes in running through your book, and the present bad state of my eyes, I cannot recover the passages where I seemed to stick a little; I shall mention therefore but one or two which my memory supplies. You will be censured perhaps for condemning the famed passage of *Josephus* so roundly, upon a principle, which will hardly be found to be true, *viz. the unsociable nature of that Religion*, not allowing a communion with any other: but *Whiston*, you know, makes *Josephus* a *Christian Bishop*; and though you will laugh here at the old man, as I myself also do, yet what will you say to the uncontested testimony of Ecclesiastical History, which asserts, *That all the first Christian Bishops of Jerusalem, through a perpetual succession of fifteen, to the final destruction of the city by Hadrian, were circumcised Jews.*

By emending a passage of *Tully*, you make him condemn *the ignorance of their ancestors, and superstition of the Priests, in the establishment of their Religion*; and refer to it afterwards as to a sense allowed and certain: yet, as far as I can remember of his real sentiments and constant professions through all his writings, he perpetually

tually applauds the wise institution of their religious rites, as admirably adapted to the genius of their government and service of the state. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend,

and servant,

C. M.

LETTER VI.

Camb. Nov. 18, 1738.

Dear Sir,

I Am obliged to you for your kind inquiry after my health; my eyes are somewhat better than they have been, which is no small comfort in my present task of writing; but in truth I may thank myself in great measure for what I suffer from them, and while I am teasing them every day beyond their strength, cannot reasonably complain, if they often make me smart for it. I have been thinking however sometimes to try the experiment which you advise, and desire therefore at your leisure to have the receipt of your Tobacco; though *ex fumo dare lucem*, seems to be an attempt too bold for one of my age. I have now an amanuensis with me transcribing my *Tully*, and might be ready for the press in the spring, could I prevail with myself to part with it so soon; if I keep it still longer,

longer, it is not because I am fond of it, but because it does not yet please me; for whenever it does, I shall be glad to get rid of it. My friends in the mean while begin to be pressing for it, and advise a subscription, to which I seem now determined, especially as I have got an additional charge upon me since I saw you, two small girls, about eight years old, who are now in the house with me, left by an unfortunate brother, who had nothing else to leave; but they are fine children, and have gained already so much upon our affections, that instead of being a burthen, we begin to think them a blessing to us; my subscription therefore is like to be of the charitable kind, and *Tully* to be their portion. I begin to think of printing at this place, where it will be most convenient to me, and where we have a syndicate on foot to regulate the Press, and bring it again into credit and order; and my neighbour *Thurlbourn*, whom I am disposed also to oblige, has been making proposals to me. But I shall not think of taking any resolution, till I can compute the size and charge of printing my work, and see a little forward into the list of subscribers; as far as I can guess at present, it will make a large volume in 4to, which, being handsomely printed, may demand a guinea for the subscription price. You will never be forgiven for your preference of the INTERNAL evidence, for that brings Reason into the controversy, which our old champions would gladly discard, finding testimony and
authority,

authority, like the cudgel or quarter-staff, the surest weapons to beat off, or knock down an adversary. But I did not expect to hear that Bishops begin to rank you on the side of the enemy, though nothing is strange from such a Bishop, who has just learning enough to make his want of sense only the more conspicuous.— I wish that you would spend some part of the winter among us at *Cambridge*, where I should be glad to have your judgement on the several parts of *Cicero's* life: we keep up a regular meeting every night at the coffee-house, which is the only hour which I spend agreeably out of my own house: Mr. ***, who charges me to repay his compliments, adds no small life to the company, but the pleasure of it would be much heightened by the benefit of your conversation. My amanuensis leads me on so fast that I can hardly keep pace with him, if I give him any start; for as he writes I revise, and insert all the authorities. I can only add our joint good wishes for your health and prosperity, and am with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend,

and servant,

C. M.

LETTER VII.

Camb. Sept. 4, 1739.

Dear Sir,

I Should have paid my thanks long ago for your last kind letter, but that I have been extremely busy, and still am so, in finishing my book for the press, whither I shall certainly commit it, about the middle of the next month. I am obliged to you for my right reverend subscriber, and the more so, for the pains that it cost you to draw him in. Episcopal gold, like that from the royal hand, may help to cure the Evil, with which I am said to be infected. I have now got fifteen of that bench, one or two of whom were even my solicitors, but could not persuade some of the rest, that my work was not levelled against Religion. This notion has been strongly inculcated, and when in the conversation, that I mentioned (with the A. B.) I took occasion to urge the folly, as well as malice of it, it was answered, that though it might prove false, yet it did not appear to be malicious, since the *Life of Homer* might justly give a handle to suspect the *Life of Tully*.

I can easily imagine, that you have suffered in the opinion of that person, and many others of the same stamp, for your charitable opinion of me; but the free manner with which you treat certain characters and opinions, which pass for sacred

facred with all such, is your fundamental and unpardonable crime, and the rest but overt acts of a secret malice and mischievous intent in it. You despise that roundness of their systems into which they have collected all the substantials of Religion, and by breaking through the circle threaten to dissolve the charm. How can a Prelate, who in his primary visitation made it his care to recommend the *Miscellany* to all the clergy, ever relish an author of your genius, whose end, as well as manner of writing, is just the reverse of that scribbler's, to pursue truth, wherever you find it, and from the midst of smog and darkness to spread light and day around you? You will hardly mend the matter, as you say, by defending Mr. *Pope*; for tho' it be an act of justice, and a task of all others the most laudable, to defend a shining character when injuriously attacked, and though it will shew the ingenuity, learning, and good taste of the author, yet it will not be thought a clerical work, such as your *St—s* and *Ch—s* attempt, all whose polemical fire and artillery are levelled against the enemies of the Church; and a stupid book against *Morgan*, or a defence of the Fathers, especially where they cannot be defended, are the sure means of making a man, first a chaplain, and at last perhaps an Archbishop. No, my friend, as long as you can love a man, because he is amiable, and think him honest, who is not perhaps orthodox, or a lover of truth, who hates a pious fraud and sanctified

sanctified lie, you may enjoy the comfort of a good conscience and good company; but must not expect, after a life of virtue and study, to flumber in the stalls, and refresh your old age in the sunshine of the Church. Pray present our best wishes and compliments to Dr. *Taylor*, whether married or unmarried, and accept the same to yourself, from,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful

and obedient servant,

C. M.

LETTER VIII.

Camb. Jan. 7, 1739-40.

Dear Sir,

I Have been a shameful time in your debt for a kind and agreeable letter, for which I have no other excuse to make, but that I have been forced of late to take the same liberty with all my friends, and content myself with the less honorable part, of receiving favours instead of giving.

I thank you for the present of your vindication of Mr. *Pope*, which my wife read over to me with much pleasure to us both, and with that satisfaction which your works will always give you friends, of seeing you triumph over

your adversaries. — You have evinced the orthodoxy of Mr. *Pope's* principles, but, like the old commentators on his *Homer*, will be thought perhaps in some places to have provided a meaning for him, that he himself never dreamt of. However, if you did not find him a philosopher, you will make him one, for he will be wise enough to take the benefit of your reading, and make his future *Essays* more clear and consistent. It was certainly a generous part in you, and worthy a man of capacity and leisure, to vindicate a writer of his genius, to whom the publick is so highly indebted, from the groundless cavils of a dull critic, which Mr. *Pope's* name and not his own had spread into every body's hands. I have been employing myself very diligently on the last part of my work, the review of *Cicero's* character and opinions, &c. where, as it seemed to fall in my way, to say something by way of note on the article you wrote of, so I have taken the opportunity of saying what I think sufficient, yet no more than what the subject naturally led me to. I think you much in the right to take no farther notice of *W—r*, you have done him too much honor already, by letting him see that he can warm you. But I shall not be displeas'd to see you give the whole tribe of them that just correction in your preface, which your masterly hand is so well able to dispense. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. M.

LETTER IX.

May 8, 1740.

Dear Sir,

I Am obliged to you for the favour of your kind letter, and much pleased with your excursion to *Twickenham*, which abounds with every thing, I know, that can make the scene agreeable to a man of taste, both within and without doors. I thank you for doing me justice to Mr. *Pope* and Mr. *Lyttelton*, and representing me in that very light, in which I desire, and shall ever endeavour, to appear to men of probity and good sense, of what party soever they may be; for I am persuaded, that there are such men to be found in all parties. I do not recollect how I could ever answer an invitation from Mr. *Pope* in a slight manner, whose character would make such a behaviour ridiculous in any man. I have always had a very high opinion of his shining and singular abilities; but from the prejudices, conceived against me by many of his friends, on the account of my writings, as well as my engagements to Lord *Hervey*, I have had reason to believe, that he also has been induced, to think me less worthy of his good opinion, than he had once imagined. I am sorry for your particular loss in Bishop *Hare*, whom I have always taken to be a real encourager of learning, as well as a learned

man; a character, that will not easily be replaced that bench. But the comfort is, that learning is a branch of virtue, that never fails to carry its reward with it; of which you have such a share, as you would not exchange, I dare say, for the best preferment in the kingdom. This is a satisfaction which I feel every day in my study, in the want of all preferment; that I can live after my own way, without attending levees, and exposing myself to disappointments, or sacrificing, what is of all things the most precious to a declining life, my time to a vain ambition. The elder Mr. *Yorke*, with his tutor *Salter*, left us suddenly upon a summons to town, where you will probably take an opportunity to wait upon him. Pray contrive to see us on your return, and spend as much time with us as you can; where you may assure yourself, of being always heartily welcome to, dear Sir,

*Your affectionate friend
and servant,*

C. M.

LETTER X.

Camb. Jan. 8, 1740-1.

Dear Sir,

THE short day which my Bookfeller has fixed for the publication of my *Cicero*, has thrown me into no small hurry, to provide all

all things ready on my side before the end of this month; I hear from all friends, that you are not less assiduous in pushing forward your work; and as I propose to be in *London* in *February*, heartily wish, that it may be in such forwardness, as to call you thither also about the same time.

Our people here have just got some notice of my letter to the A—b—p, which is spread, as usual, through the University. His Grace, it seems, shewed it lately to Dr. M—y, who gave a particular account of it to a Fellow of *Sidney*, but with no intimation of any reflection made upon it either by his Grace or the Doctor, which is the whole that I have yet learnt of it. My first comfort is, from the reserve observed about it, after shewing it to enemies, that they are at a loss how to draw any thing from it to my disadvantage, and for the rest I am perfectly easy. The Church has received a great loss by the death of Dr. W——d. I cannot say an irreparable one, whilst C——n lives; to whom he has left some unfinished papers on *Infant Communion*, and wisely ordered all the rest to be burnt; he has bequeathed likewise to the College, such of his printed books, as they find scribbled by his own hand, for such, I hear, is his own description of them. By the silence of the public papers, upon the fall of so eminent a luminary, we are to expect, I imagine, in a proper time, some labored panegyric from a masterly hand. Though the great *Hooker* seems to have

exhausted himself in an effort of the last week, to do justice to the character of the excellent *Eusebius*, who is preparing to give the *Coup de grace* to that subtle and ingenious, but infamous writer, the moral Philosopher.—But as to *W—d*, whenever they think fit to oblige the public with his life, they will not forget one story, I hope, which is truly worthy of him, shews the real spirit of the man, and which I can venture to tell you on good authority. In his last journey from *Cambridge* to *London*, being attended by Dr. *P—e*, and *C—n* the Surgeon, he lodged the second night at *Hodsdon*, where, being observed to have been constive on the road, he was advised to have a clyster, to which he consented. The Apothecary was presently sent for, to whom Dr. *P—e* gave his orders below stairs, while Dr. *W—d* continued above; upon which the Apothecary could not forbear expressing his great sense of the honor which he received, in being called to the assistance of so celebrated a person, whose writings he was well acquainted with; the company signified some surprize to find a country Apothecary so learned; but he assured them, that he was no stranger to the merit and character of the Doctor, but had lately read his ingenious book with much pleasure, *The Divine Legation of Moses*; Dr. *P—e* and a Fellow of *Magdalen* there present, took pains to convince the Apothecary of his mistake, while *C—n* ran up stairs with an account of his
blunder

blunder to *W*—*d*, who, provoked by it into a violent passion, called the poor fellow a puppy, and blockhead, who must needs be ignorant in his profession, and unfit to administer any thing to him, and might possibly poison his bowels; and notwithstanding Dr. *P*—*e*'s endeavours to moderate his displeasure, by representing the expediency of the operation, and the man's capacity to perform it, he would hear nothing in his favour, but ordered him to be discharged, and postponed the benefit of the clyster till he reached his next stage. With such wretched passions and prejudices did this poor man march to his grave, which might deserve to be laughed at, rather than lamented, if we did not see what pernicious influence they have in the Church, to defame and depress men of sense and virtue, who have had the courage to despise them.

I am, with true esteem, and our joint wishes of many happy years,

Dear Sir,

Your affect. friend

and servant,

C. M.

LETTER XI.

*Camb. April 5, 1741.**Dear Sir,*

I Returned to *Cambridge* on *Friday* last, where I had no sooner been welcomed by the affectionate salutations of my family, than I received the additional pleasure of your kind letter. I was quite tired of the town before I left it, and called sometimes at *Gyles's* in hopes of being refreshed by the expectation of your arrival; but you resolve, I perceive, to make your appearance first by proxy, and to oblige the world with the entertainment which it impatiently expects, from the publication of your second volume; to which I heartily wish all the success that you desire, or what, I am persuaded, is still more, all that it will really merit. —I am obliged to you for your congratulation on the favorable reception of my work, which has answered indeed all my wishes; and you will readily believe, that I esteem it as a particular honour, that it has merited the approbation of your friends, *Mr. Pope* and *Mr. Lyttelton*, with whom I spent a very agreeable afternoon at *Mr. Murray's*, where they both joined in strong expressions of their friendship and esteem of you. As to the circumstance, from which you draw so just and useful a lesson, of our differing from each other in some particular

lar

lar opinions, as I was always persuaded, that it could not have any other effect upon you, so I have the comfort to assure you, that I never felt the least impression from it, disadvantageous to our friendship; it is the necessary consequence of that privilege of our nature, on which all men of sense set the highest value, the liberty of judging for ourselves; yet, since it would be a great satisfaction to me in all cases, to find my judgement confirmed by yours, so when you are at full leisure, I should be glad to know the particular reasons which force you to differ from me on the subject of *Cicero's* opinions, to which alone our difference in the present case is to be referred, that as far as is possible we may come still nearer to each other.

We have been alarmed in the University for some days past by an opposition declared against Mr. *Finch*, but it is now dropped, and we shall chuse our old member again to-morrow.

As soon as I can sit down again to my books, I shall prepare a new edition of my letter from *Rome*, in 8vo, enlarged with a prefatory answer to a Popish writer, who has animadverted upon it; where I shall take occasion to explain my sentiments more explicitly with regard to my belief of the Scriptures, in a manner proper to satisfy all reasonable and candid readers; and for the rest, it would be a weakness in me to expect or desire that I should ever satisfy them. I shall depend on your paying us a visit, either as you go or return from *London*, for I have

many things to talk over with you, which I cannot commit to letter. I desire you to make my compliments to *Dr. Taylor*, with my thanks for all his favours, and to assure you that I am with the greatest truth,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere friend

and faithful servant,

C. M.

LETTER XII.

Camb. Oct. 22, 1741.

Dear Sir,

YOUR obliging letter found me at *Hildersham*, where I spent the autumn with my family, and where the amusements of the country, and the necessity of reforming a rude farm into a tolerable habitation, engrossed my time and thoughts so entirely, as to leave me neither leisure nor inclination indeed to take a pen in hand, for any other purpose but to draw plans and settle accounts with my workmen. I returned to *Cambridge* on *Saturday* last, and have taken my seat again in my study, where it shall be my first task to pay my debts to all my friends, for their favours not yet acknowledged; and especially to yourself, whose letter, I assure you, gave me a particular pleasure, as it furnished

furnished a fresh proof not onely of your candor and good temper, but of your friendship also to me; and whenever you may find occasion, as you intimate, to publish any observations upon my Postscript, I make no doubt, but that you will give the public the same reason to applaud your moderation, and set them such a pattern, of what we call polemical writing, as ought to be copied by all men of liberal education. But whenever you think fit to give yourself that trouble, you will remember, that the point which you assert, and the single point contested in the Postscript, is, that the Papists, or the introducers of those rites, which we call Popish, had no view or reference to Paganism in the introduction of them, and that in fact there were none of them introduced, while there were any Pagan prejudices subsisting among Christians. If you make out this point, (and nothing less can be thought to justify what you declare in the paragraph referred to by me) you will have the credit of discovering a truth, unknown, I believe, before, to the learned world. I am far from imagining, that you had the least intention of discrediting any argument against Popery, which you took to be a good one, and I may perhaps have said too much, in charging your opinion with overthrowing *the use* of my book; but it must needs hurt *the credit* at least of a work, that has been well received, to inform the public, that it is grounded at last on a mistake; and though it may
happen

happen to wound the Papists, that it hits them, as it were, onely by chance. You take notice, that what you have said on the question in difference between us, was essential to your argument; but I can assure you, that it was the general opinion of all my acquaintance, who reflected upon it, that you had stept out of your way, to give a blow to the assertors of the Paganism of *Rome*, and for that very reason were not so clear and connected in the conclusion of that section, as in the rest of your ingenious work. I am much pleased, that any part of my late performance can deserve your approbation, and especially those pages which you mention. I was ever ready to have given the same satisfaction, when it should fall naturally in my way, and belonged to my subject, as I told you, I remember, when you were so kind as to advise me to it, but I could not submit to do it, on the demand of a *V-----n* or a *W-----r*, which would have exposed me onely to fresh censure, and a more reasonable suspicion of me. I am glad to hear, that any occasion will call you to town this winter; you call it indeed a ridiculous one, but if I guess at it aright, it may one day produce something serious to your advantage. For as times now go, *Horace's* rule of comic wit, may not improperly be applied to our conduct in civil life, and the ridiculous part do your business more effectually, than all the merit of your graver character: *Ridiculum acri fortius ac melius*, &c. I received lately a
 very

to Mr. WARBURTON. 413

very friendly letter from Dr. *Taylor*, for which I desire you to pay him my thanks and compliments till I find leisure, which I want at present, to acknowledge it myself. Mr. *Tunstall* carried his election yesterday more clearly than was imagined, by a majority of 23, his number of votes being 160. I beg your acceptance of our joint wishes of health and happiness to you, and am, with true respect,

Dear Sir,

Your affect. friend,

and servant,

C. M.

Three Letters of Dr. MIDDLETON
to another of his Friends.

LETTER I.

Camb. Nov. 19, 1747.

Dear Sir,

I Have been so particularly engaged ever since I was favoured with yours of the 5th instant, that I have not found leisure till now to thank you, as I should otherwise have done much sooner, for your clear and distinct account of Dr. *D* — *n's* book, which was very agreeable to me, as it is an actual exemplification

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tion of the argument of the *Introductory Dis-*
course.

I have formerly been acquainted with several Nonjurors of distinguished learning in this University, whom I always perceived to be fond of the same principles, which you have extracted from these *Catechisms*; and to be arrived so near to the confines of Popery, as if they were prepared to step into it again, whenever a proper occasion should intervene; which many of them would defend, as a more eligible step, than an union with any other Protestant sect, as being more remote still from the primitive pattern. These principles I could never digest, from the time when I began to think and judge for myself; and they gave me the first disgust to what was then sanctified by the title of Orthodoxy. Nor has the authority of those ancient fathers, from whom they are derived, altered my opinion of them; nor can any authority indeed ever persuade me to receive as sacred and divine, what my sense and reason declare to be absurd and superstitious. Yet this is the Religion, which primitive antiquity recommends to us. But it is a comfort to observe, as well of our Clergy as the Laity, that they are generally become more easy and moderate in their notions of Religion, than they have formerly been, from that more free and natural way of expounding its doctrines, which has obtained of late years, not onely in the established Church, but in all the prudent and sensible part of our
Protestant

Protestant sects; who all seem now to agree in making our common sense and reason the genuine test and measure of our common faith; which is the only way to preserve any peace or charity among Christian societies. This good fruit will be improved still, I dare say, by the choice of our new Archbishop; I may say, of the two Archbishops, who seem both to be of a character quite opposite to the last; men of an open and candid disposition, and lovers of liberty both religious and civil.

As to the expectations, which you mention, from me, I have promised a work indeed to the public, of which I will not disappoint it; but cannot tell, as yet, in what time I shall be able to send it abroad. Expectation is an adversary, against which I must guard it with the more care; and the argument is important, which will require therefore the greater attention, and the alarm, which it seems to have given to many, will oblige me to clear it of all offence, except such, as plain fact and truth may possibly give: and let that reach as far as it will, I shall have no concern for the consequences.

In the mean while I should be glad, if you can send me any information relating to the subject, or any thing, which you may have heard worth notice, concerning the sentiments or apprehensions of men of sense about it; and when you pass by *Manby's* shop, I desire, if

D——n's

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D—n's book be sold in town, that you would
order him to send it to,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate

and faithful servant,

C. M.

LETTER II.

Camb. Dec. 15, 1748.

Dear Sir,

I Am ashamed to find myself so late in acknowledging the favour of your last obliging letter, and the literary notices, which you therein furnished for the use of my book. But I beg you to be assured, that the tardiness of my thanks did not proceed from any disregard to you, for whom I have long conceived a very just esteem; nor yet from any slight opinion of the authorities which you had collected; but from my own indolence and disinclination to writing letters, contracted by the interruption which it gives to my few hours of study, and the difficulty which it creates to my weak eyes, which will not suffer me to write or read what is necessary to the task, to which I have devoted the remainder of my days, of informing myself, as well as I am able, of any thing that is right and good, and of communicating that information to the public, as being the sole way, which my condition of life has opened to me, of doing
any

any good in the world, or making a proper use of these slender talents, with which Providence has entrusted me.

As to your authorities, though I made no use of them in my work, which was quite finished before they reached me; they may probably be of service hereafter, for the defence and confirmation of my argument against the cavils of adversaries, who will not fail to attack it wherever they can find a weak part; as I am not so vain as to think, that any performance of mine can be clear of several parts of that sort. I should be very glad to hear your free sentiments upon it, as well as what reception it meets with elsewhere; and especially what objections are made by men of sense to my part, where it is thought defective in matter of proof or probability.

The duke of *Newcastle* was yesterday elected our Chancellor, with great chearfulness and unanimity. Dr. *Whalley*, our Regius Professor of Divinity, died the night before of an apoplectic case, in which he lay convulsed for a day or two. The candidates mentioned for the vacant Professorship are, Dr. *Paris*, Master of *Sidney* College, Mr. *Green*, Fellow of *St. John's*, and Mr. *Young* of *Trinity*, our public Orator, all of them men of good merit and principles. I am, with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend, and servant,

C. M.

LETTER III.

*Jan. 16, 1748-9.**Dear Sir,*

YOUR letter of the 10th instant gave me no small satisfaction, by assuring me of the general concurrence of the candid and judicious in their favourable opinion of my late work. The approbation of men of that character is all that I desire, and what the consciousness indeed of my own conviction gave me some reason to expect. The case is much the same in this University, where, as far as I am informed, my book has spread a general persuasion of the truth of what I affirm in it; and, what is still less to be expected in such a place as this, without giving any sort of offence by any part of it, which has yet been taken notice of; tho' there are some cautious people always among us, who affect a reserve and silence on subjects of this kind, till they are instructed from abroad in what manner they ought to treat them.

Mr. *Fortin*, whom you mention, is a very worthy, learned, and judicious man; yet had no reason, I think, to expect in my work any notice of that miraculous story, concerning the attempt to rebuild *Jerusalem*: and your answer on that occasion was the very same, which I had given myself, when my sentiments were asked upon the same fact.

In drawing up my remarks on that miracle, which *Berriman* defends, I had got a notion of some objections made to the reality of that case of the *Ipswich* woman, so as to render it of dubious credit; which made me unwilling to venture upon it. But I have since been convinced, that the fact was indisputably attested; and that the transactions of the Royal Society would have supplied an instance as strong and direct to my purpose, as that which I borrowed from the *French* academy.

The notices which you communicate, concerning Mr. *Dodwell*, *Joseph Mede*, &c. may be probably of use to me hereafter: and since the publication of my book, I have found the character of St. *Jerom* treated with much freedom, by some of our orthodox Divines and lovers of antiquity, and among them by Dr. *Cave* himself. I had prepared a note or two likewise for my *Introductory Discourse*, which I forgot afterwards to insert, concerning the opinions of some of Queen *Elizabeth's* Divines, which I collected from *Strype*, who tells us in his *Annals*, that one *James Calfhill* (*), a man much esteemed for his knowledge of the primitive fathers,

(*) He was first student, and afterwards canon of *Christ Church, Oxford*, dean of *Barking in Essex*, and archdeacon of *Colchester*, and nominated by queen *Elizabeth* to the bishopric of *Worcester*, but died before his consecra-

tion, in *August* 1570. The passage referred to in Dr. *Middleton's* Letter, is in p. 23, of his Answer to *John Martial's Treatise of the Cross*; which Answer was printed at *London* in 1565, in 4to.

declared, that he had read them all, and strictly examined their words and assertions, from the very first Doctors of the Church after the apostolic times, and had found *Imperfections in them all*; which, for the reason given by Mr. *Dodwell*, he was unwilling to expose.

Manby has sent me down four small pamphlets, proposed to come out weekly, called *The Mitre and Crown, &c.* in which I find myself and my work abused with great rage and virulence of language, but without any argument that touched the point in question. I should guess the writer to be some nonjuring Divine, who writes partly for bread, and partly for the orthodox cause of that ancient and hereditary right, which would give us both our Kings and Bishops from *Rome*.

I paid your compliments to Mr. *Green*, who will be chosen our Divinity Professor this week, without any competition, after a probationary lecture, which he is appointed to read on certain texts of Scripture in the public schools, on *Thursday* next. He is a very ingenious man, of good temper and principles, and will fill the chair, I dare say, with credit. The new Master also of *Peter-house*, Dr. *Keen*, is a very sensible and agreeable man, and likely to make an useful head, both to the College and the University. By Dr. *Heberden's* removal from us, I have received a great and particular loss, which I shall ever feel, though the sense of it will be much abated, to hear of its being attended
with

with all the success on his part that I wish. One advantage he is sure to meet with, and for which alone I shall envy him; I mean that choice of good company with which *London* always abounds.

Pray make my compliments to all friends, and believe me, with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful

and obedient servant,

C. M.

TO MR. VENN.

Camb. Feb. 23, 1734-5.

S I R,

I Have been well informed, that some time ago, you took the liberty to call me by name an *Apostate Priest*. I find the same calumny more publickly repeated in the *Miscellany* of Feb. 15, on a certain person, not named, whose writings have had the misfortune to displease you; and as you are said to be concerned in the furnishing out this weekly paper, in partnership with another worthy Divine, so I cannot avoid considering myself as the object of your abuse in both cases.

The

The onely thing that puzzles me, is to discover by what principle of Christianity you think yourself justified in such a license of calumniating; or how can you imagine a behaviour so shocking to good nature, good sense, and good manners, to be the effect of any good Religion.

There must needs be some strange mistake between us on one side or the other. The word *Religion* perhaps may have something in it equivocal, and denote a quite different thing with you and with me. If your Religion prescribes, permits, or does not condemn, all such defamation as impious and detestable, you clear me at once of Apostasy; for that Religion was never mine: and I cannot be charged with deserting what I had never professed.

Be so good, Sir, as to favour me with some account of this matter. I have a right, I think, to require at least this satisfaction. You are the onely man who has ventured to call me an Apostate; and if you are an honest man, you would not be particular in your accusation, without a particular assurance of the truth of it; nor so forward with your charge, without being as ready with your proofs. Tell me, then, in God's name, nay, tell the public all that you know of me: speak out freely; charge every thing, that either your own malice suggests, or that of others has supplied you with. If you can convict me of any thing immoral or irreligious, of any apostasy from what is laudable

able or virtuous, I will take shame to myself and own it; if not, shall seek no other revenge than that of leaving you to the reproach of your conscience, and the scorn of all good men.

I could wish likewise to be informed, of what use it can be to the interest of Christianity, of what advantage to Religion, to proclaim to the world that I am an Apostate. Should your *Miscellany* fall into the hands of men wavering in the faith, staggering at every scruple, shaken by every breath of scandal, and there must be many such in this sceptical age, might it not be of weight enough, in the equilibrium of their doubts, to turn the scale on the Infidel side, to be assured by you, that a Clergyman, trained in the bosom of the Church, of some reputation and many friends, after a life spent in temperance, study, and the search of truth, had by choice and judgement deserted it? It is the constant policy of all sects, to challenge to their party any man of merit, supposed even on the slightest grounds to have discovered some inclination to them; but your absurd zeal would forcibly drive from the service of Religion, men of virtue and learning, against their will, against their profession, against truth.

The person whom you treat so infamously, *convinced*, you say, *either of his wickedness or imprudence*, has desisted from troubling us further with his profaneness. You allow it then to be a question, whether it was wickedness or imprudence that excited him to write: you allow,
that

that whichsoever it was, he is now convinced, and has desisted. This, one would think, might have induced you to suffer a man to be quiet, who suffers every body else to be so: he repents, it seems; has changed his conduct, troubles nobody; yet all this passes for nothing with you; your charity gives no quarter: his repentance must be overlooked, his apostasy always remembered, and his very conviction made a matter of fresh reproach to him. This is the true spirit of *Rome*, that never spares a penitent, who returns from desertion. For whilst you take such pains to murder a reputation, seeking, according to you, to heal itself by conviction and amendment, you declare what you would do with persons, were they as much in your power.

But though he has desisted from troubling us himself, yet other enemies, you say, *have refitted their armour at his forge: and the witty Socinian and crafty Jesuit make great advantage of his writings.* And here again, I must beg you to tell me, where it is, that these adversaries are found tampering with his works; where it is, that we may catch them quoting or building their errors upon his principles. If you cannot shew this, we must take the insinuation for another fiction of your malice, as senseless as it is spiteful; a bolt shot out at random, which by falling somewhere luckily may chance to do mischief. Is the growth of Popery to be charged at last upon me, who have taken more pains,
and

and perhaps with more success, to expose its frauds and corruptions, than most Clergymen now living? Ridiculous calumny! No, Sir, the *Jesuits*, I can answer for it, will readily join forces with you; will second your pious endeavours of wounding my reputation, ruining my credit, and defaming me every where, as a malicious, profane Apostate. It is here, after all, that I am touching the bottom of the sore: it was my piece against Popery that gave the first scandal, and the first bad impression of me. As soon as it was published, that learned Divine, your partner, happening to meet me in the street, told me, with a formal face and air of importance, that he had been in company with certain friends, who declared themselves offended at it. I asked him, whether they had found any thing false in it? And perceiving that there was no objection of that sort, left him with no other reflection, than that of a just contempt for the impertinence of the information. I heard afterwards of another *****.

These were the men, who first began the clamour, and raised the first envy upon me; and I am now but paying the arrears of that old grudge, as you seem to intimate in this very *Miscellany*: for you say, that it was natural for me to hate, what I had before betrayed: as if there was a guilt upon me, previous to that I have been lately charged with, and the æra of my Apostasy was to bear the same date with my *Letter from Rome*. The more I reflect on

your rashness, the more I am inclined to impute it to some selfish motive of interest; some hopes of gain or glory to accrue from it. It is common with the writers of your class, to run the risk of a pillory, to raise the fame and value of their weekly productions; and we read of an hero in antiquity, who set the temple of his country on fire, to perpetuate his name to posterity. In this view, you act consistently, tho' in all views wickedly. But to talk of reforming morals, and recommending Religion, by a method destructive of all morality, and contrary to all Religion, is a mere banter and affront to reason and common sense. But whilst you dispense so freely the titles of profane and apostate, let me recommend to you to consider the history of that first and chief Apostate, the pattern, as well as author, of every other apostasy in the world. You will find his abominable qualities summed up in this short character, *The accuser of the brethren*, Rev. xii. 10. you will find him described, as defaming *day* and *night*; continually going about roaring, and seeking to devour. This, says St. *John*, is the old Dragon, which is the Devil and Satan, Rev. xx. 2. And what, Sir, is the Devil, that is, Satan, but names drawn from his very essence, signifying the adversary, the hater, the accuser of mankind? His followers, like their master, are described by *David*, under the person of *Doeg*, the malicious accuser of the Priests: with tongues that devise mischief; that love de-

pouring words, Pſal. lii. 2, 4. and as men sit on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword, Pſal. lvii. 4. This is the grand, the ſovereign Apoſtaſy; the deſection from all Religion; a delight in defaulting, an alacrity in accusing; and I leave it to you to determine, where the reproach of it is the moſt likely to fall, on yourſelf or on me. You have called me an *Apoſtate*; all people, I dare ſay, or all at leaſt who know me, will be ſhocked at it: but ſhould I chance to deſcribe a certain Prieſt by the title of the *Accuſer*, there is ſcarce a man in *England* who would not immediately think on Mr. VENN. A reflection ſufficient, methinks, to admoniſh you, that, inſtead of being ſo buſy with other men's characters, it behoves you much more to turn your thoughts and attention to your own.

But if it be poſſible, after all, that I ſhould ever have it in my power to ſay of you, what you declare of me, that through a conviction of your wickedneſs, you had changed your conduct, and deſiſted from calumniating; I ſhould ſtill act on this, as I ſhall do on every occaſion, juſt contrary to the example you ſet me; I ſhould rejoice in the change, begin to entertain hopes and a better opinion of you, and forget the accuſer to applaud the convert.

CONYERS MIDDLETON.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.







